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Special Issue on
Lifelong Learners

Special Issue Editors:
John Pateman



Information for Social Change is an activist organisation that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal, *Information for Social Change* (freely available online at <http://www.libr.org/isc>). Information for Social Change is an Organisation in Liaison with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).

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Editorial

In Lincolnshire I manage the Public Library Service and the Adult Learning Service. Both services have the same strategic objectives: to enable lifelong learning, to build social inclusion and to promote community regeneration. In many contexts it is possible to interchange Public Libraries with Adult Learning and vice versa.

Both services also face a number of challenges. Following a series of reviews Adult Learning was refocused away from leisure learning and towards skills development and employability. This has led to a large reduction in the number of adult education courses and enrolments. Public libraries are currently the subject of three separate reviews: a Modernisation Review by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS); a review of governance and leadership by the All Party Parliamentary Libraries Group; and a UNISON review. It will be interesting to see what direction these reviews point us in – and whether it is the same direction!

One side effect of all this scrutiny is that libraries have moved right up the agenda of both the DCMS and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). Culture Secretary Andy Burnham is to work jointly with John Denham, Secretary of State at DIUS 'to ensure better access to libraries, museums and colleges as part of a wider government drive to introduce more adults to the pleasures of learning.'

The value of libraries (and other cultural venues) in 'informal education' has long been pushed, most notably by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) with its massive *Inspiring Learning for All* programme. But a DIUS consultation paper in January 2008, *Informal Adult Learning: shaping the way ahead*, showed very limited awareness of libraries' existing work, let alone their potential.

Current National Year of Reading projects got a mention, as did the success of Hampshire libraries in attracting Learndirect customers, and the well established UK Online centres, half of which are in libraries. But the Vital Link was ignored, despite its huge nationwide partnership work with emergent adult readers. This

has led, in turn, to the best selling Quick Read books involving top line authors, publishers – and the entire World Book Day publicity machine.

Responses to *Informal Adult Learning* came from CILIP, MLA, library aware bodies such as the Campaign for Learning and the National Literacy Trust, numerous local authorities and library services including those in Birmingham, Leicester, Lincolnshire and Sunderland. While DIUS was excited about ICT, the major call from respondents was for better access to private and public spaces and public funding especially for adults who have had least access in the past. 'Strong local partnerships' will be the key DIUS now says. And access to libraries is top of the list.

This edition of ISC celebrates the new alliance between libraries and adult learning. The scene is set in two key note papers by Dr Ray Shore. *Changes in Adult and Community Education* explores the impact of policy on organisations and individuals. *Learning, Learning Communities and Globalisation* looks at policy development and its impact on implementation. The historical links between public libraries and adult education are examined by Andrew Hudson in *Back to the Future?- Lifelong learning in libraries*.

My article on *Developing a NEETS Based Library Service* argues that public libraries have an important role to play in meeting the needs of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). My other contribution, *Policing Library Users*, considers some of the ethical and practical issues surrounding the recent MLA guidance on 'controversial stock.' I am a member of the CILIP Task & Finish Group which is currently discussing these issues.

I have also included my review of Shiraz Durrani's excellent new book *Information and liberation: writings on the politics of information and librarianship*. Finally, there is a summary by Jane Pitcher and Elizabeth Eastwood-Krah of their interim evaluation report on the *Quality Leaders Project (Youth) initiative*, which several public library authorities, including Lincolnshire, were involved in.

John Pateman

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Changes in Adult and Community Education: The Impact of Policy on Organisations and Individuals

Dr Ray Shore

1) Introduction

In an article in Adults Learning (September 2005) Alan Tuckett the Director of The National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE), asks whether or not the time has come to agree a 'new settlement' for the funding of adult learning. In Tuckett's (2005, p.6) words the sector requires:

'A new settlement that establishes the proportions that the state, individual and employer should pay for different types of provision, that highlights a fair and coherent system of learner support, consistency across providers and sectors, and then encourages providers to exercise local discretion to maximise the benefits secured through public investment'.

Tuckett's article supports a national campaign by NIACE, 'Fairer Funding for Adults' (2005), which runs parallel to a debate about shifting priorities and criteria for eligibility to subsidised learning in the sector. Budgets for the provision of adult learning are coming under increasing pressure as the implications of the Learning and Skills Act (2000) and more recently the Skills Strategy (DfES 2003) begin to make a tangible impact on learning provision for adults. The current debate is, in essence, about the type of learning that the public purse 'should fund' and who will be entitled to access subsidised learning.

This debate however, extends beyond the introduction of a target driven funding for adult learning and embraces a range of issues that are rooted in a wider ideological tensions about the appropriate use of public funds. This circumstance is broadly characterised as a 'challenge to the post war welfare consensus' and is

discussed in more detail by a number of writers e.g. Pollitt (1993 and 2003) Clarke and Newman (1997) Clarke et al (2000) Bovaird and Loffler (2001) Banks (2004) and Newman et al (2005). Recent and impending changes to funding methodologies and the introduction of sectoral targets represent just one aspect of a spectrum of change ushered in by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 that saw the formation of the Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). Patterns of change previously instituted in for example the Health Service, Social Services and the compulsory education sector (see Clarke and Newman 1997) are being driven, albeit belatedly, through the Adult and Community Education sector.

These changes are characteristic of a longer-term attempt to make the public sector more efficient through modernisation. Clarke and Newman (1997 p.viv), noting a period during which the role of state has been the centre of attention, '... from attempts to control public spending, through Civil Service reforms, to the creation of new delivery systems for welfare services, also argue that these changes constitute a 'set of ideologies and practices' that challenge the relationship between 'the state and the citizen' between public and private, between the providers and recipients of welfare and between management and politics.' Tuckett's interjection sets adult and community education at the centre of these processes.

This paper explores some of the implications of these broader policy imperatives on the delivery of Adult and Community Education within the context of a Local Authority. It focuses in particular on the changing nature and requirements of management and the consequences, both direct and indirect, of that change on the organisation and individuals who, either directly or indirectly, deliver or receive the Service.

2) Context

Two key Structural Drivers: The LSC and The Adult Learning Inspectorate.

a) The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The LSC is a Non Departmental Public Body established by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 to '...modernise and simplify arrangements for planning, funding and delivering education and training for over-16s, except for higher education' (LSC 2005). Its emphasis in terms of adult learning is on provision that is firmly linked to need and, in particular, the needs of those who have hitherto achieved little by way of learning success. The Learning and Skills Council are explicit about this target group and of the need to ensure that resources are directed to support the needs of this group (Priorities for Success, Oct 2005). The priority groups for public funding are adults with basic skills needs and those without a full level 2 qualification. Bill Rammell MP, The Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, in his letter to providers (Oct, 2005) states:

'Adults in entitlement groups and national fee remission categories – that is everyone studying literacy and numeracy skills or a first full level 2 qualification, and those on job seekers allowance or income related benefits and their dependants- will continue to receive free tuition':

This category of potential learners is the priority for funding allocated for adult learning provision. The funding strategy is, according to Rammell (2005) 'clearly driven by policy priorities...' The Government however, also acknowledge that there are strong arguments for maintaining learning capacity outside the current national priorities. Potential for this exists within the proposed 'safeguard' on funding for Personal and Community Development (PCDL).

In the Skills Strategy (DfES 2003), the government set out a clear intention to rebalance public and private contributions to the cost of learning. Rammell (October 2005) reinforces this message noting that the government is 'broadly' maintaining overall levels of public funding in the period to 2007/08 however '...the pattern of that learning will change' to meet national priorities and consequently '... the number of publicly funded places which do not lead to a nationally recognised qualification is likely to fall by around 500,000'. In addition ' There will need to be a tighter focus on key priorities in public funding for adult learning, with more provision delivered at full cost and a significant increase in fees.' This statement reinforces the position outlined in 'Priorities for Success' (LSC. October 2005).

Summary

This section has introduced the Learning and Skills Council and outlined its key purpose. The introduction of the LSC has changed the means by which local authority adult education services are funded, governed and administered. Alongside this the LSC has introduced its own business cycle, monitoring procedures and quality framework. The parallel introduction of targets and performance indicators has been instrumental in encouraging modernisation and change. The range and significance of these changes also affects more intangible aspects of Service delivery and may also lead to the erosion of professional discretion and local flexibility.

b) The Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate is a non-departmental public body established under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. It began inspecting in April 2001 using the recently revised (April 2005) Common Inspection Framework (CIF) as its template. This framework assesses provision against five key criteria as follows:

- How well do learners achieve?
- How effective are teaching, training and learning?
- How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
- How well are learners guided and supported?
- How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

The introduction of this framework into the Adult and Community Education sector represented something of a transformation. Hitherto inspection had been infrequent, unsystematic and comparatively unstructured, its outcomes of little consequence. The new framework and accompanying inspection cycle has the potential for a judgement that provision is inadequate. The CIF is also linked closely to the LSC's business cycle, which includes an annual Self Assessment Report (SAR), a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and an Annual Rolling Plan. These documents form an integral part of a rigorous quality framework that

requires, for example, all learning to have a scheme of work and lesson plan alongside an individual learner record which contains learner specific and measurable targets. In one sense this process mirrors that which has been common in the compulsory education sector for some time. However in the post compulsory world of adult education characterised to an extent by part time tutors working in relatively informal surroundings, these new requirements contain the seeds of transformation if not revolution.

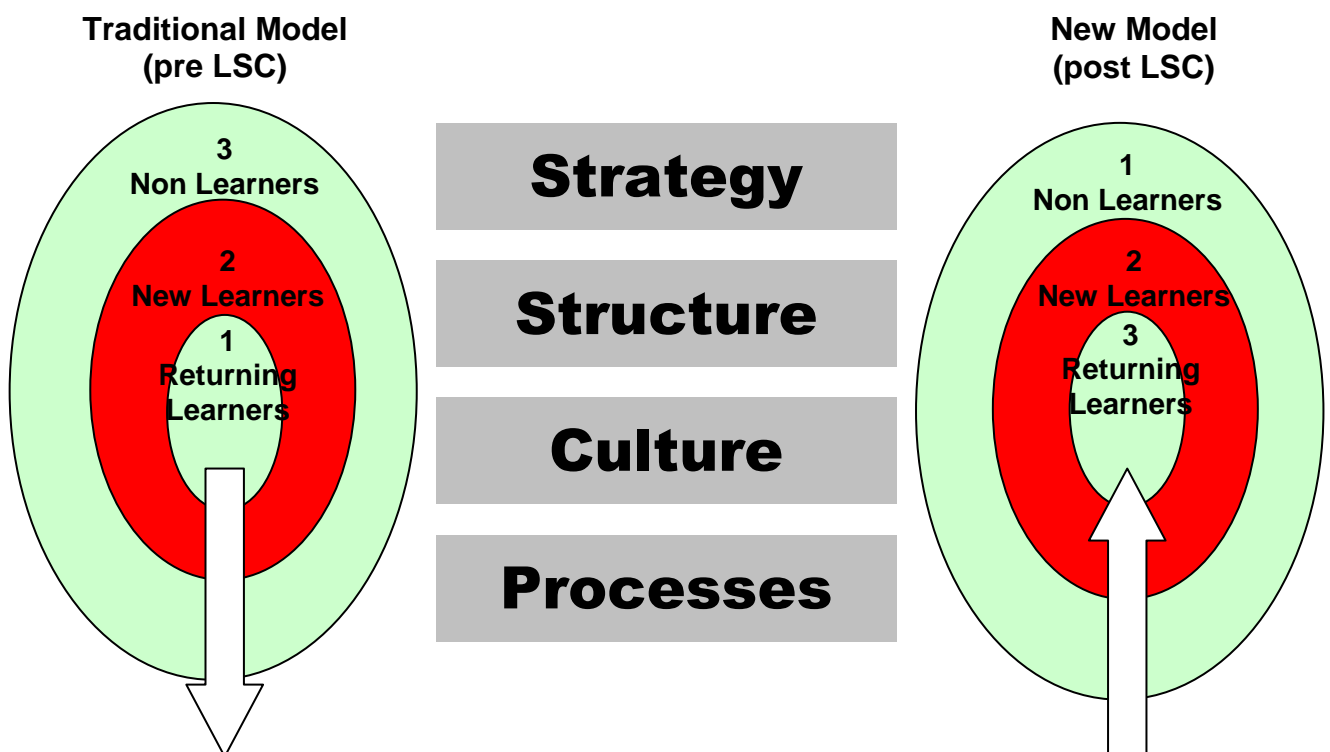
At its most benign this approach represents a national prescription for adult education defining good practice, assessing it against evolving national benchmarks, publishing the outcomes of that assessment and supporting continuous improvement. Inevitably however, the scale between compliance and non-compliance mirrors that between satisfactory and unsatisfactory, success and failure and as Clarke et al (2000 p. 257) note, such assessments '... are intended to have significant consequences for the fortunes of the organisation'. In addition and in order to ensure success, resources may be directed against an ever narrowing set of criteria with a tendency to focus on the 'core business' or on that part of the business which facilitates auditable and audited success.

Summary

The advent of the Adult Learning inspectorate has ushered in a range of significant changes to the sector. Inspection against national criteria (the CIF) and the publication of inspection reports bring increased scrutiny and accountability to both learners and leaders. Inspection also brings a sharp focus on leadership and management not only at service level but also at a political level. Quality assurance systems and value for money assessments link closely to the work and expectations of the Learning and Skills Council. In addition to the more positive and supportive aspects of inspection there may be a tendency to subjugate decision making to the inspection framework thereby removing a degree of professional and local discretion.

3) Transforming Services

The changing approach to Adult and Community Learning discussed in this paper is illustrated by the following:



(Adapted from Pateman 2004)

Diagram 1 illustrates a generalised view of the Learning and Skills Councils proposals and also highlights four bridging themes namely: Strategy, Structure, Culture and Processes. These themes constitute an important part of the transition from 'old' to 'new' and have implications for the 'organisation' and the 'individual'.

On the left of the diagram Service delivery is based on an historical approach to funding allocation and programme focus, concentrating resource on a traditional group of learners who have attended and continued to attend Adult Education provision over a number of years. These are the learners at the centre of the circle. In this model there is very little resource allocation for learners in the outer circle representing what are often defined as the 'hard to reach'. In the diagram to the right the arrow representing resource allocation and programme definition begins at the outer edge engaging with hard to reach groups as the priority for public funding. The previous learners at the centre of the diagram will find that their access to publicly funded provision will change. The outcome of the Learning and Skills Councils proposals will be that this group of learners will pay more for their access to learning. Alternatively they may seek different providers. (See Priorities for Success, Oct 2005)

Before the inception of the Learning and Skills Council, the transfer of powers from Local Authorities and the confirmation of the LSC's agenda in October 2005, Local Authorities were in a position to exercise a significant degree of autonomy and flexibility in relation to their provision for Adults. Legislation in 2000 had the effect of nationalising the adult education budget with a clear aim of securing a minimum offer for adults wherever they lived.

The more recent context is located in a funding framework and a set of national criteria that defines need alongside what is valid, acceptable and publicly fundable, learning. The revised Common Inspection Framework (ALI/OfSTED, 2005) defines the parameters within which the processes supporting teaching and learning are legitimised and subjected to public scrutiny.

In summary The Adult and Community Education sector is being transformed. Funding and provision that was previously the statutory responsibility of local authorities is now firmly located within the remit and responsibility of the Learning and Skills Councils. In future learning will be purchased by the LSC from a range of accredited providers in order to meet their priorities and targets. This more marketised strategy represents a significant departure from previous arrangements under which local authorities operated to deliver services either directly or through contractual arrangements. This range of changes is located in a wider context, that of changes to the way in which government policy is managed and implemented at local authority level and mirrors the broader challenge to the what Clarke and Newman (1997) have termed the post war 'welfare settlement'.

4) The Changing Face of Public Service

Since the mid 70s there has been a focus on what Clarke and Newman (1997) describe as changes to the welfare settlement. Gramsci (1971) quoted in Clarke and Newman (p.1) observes that crises '... create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life.' The economic and social circumstances of the 70s evidenced by events such as the oil price shock (1973), the Labour Governments subsequent recourse to the International Monetary Fund, increasing unemployment and the social conflict generated through the period of unrest leading to the Callaghan Governments nemesis in the Winter of Discontent (1979) could certainly be categorised as a crisis and as such provide the 'fertile terrain' to which Gramsci alludes.

These changes are a precursor to a challenge to the welfare consensus and a move towards an ideology that sees expenditure on public services as a cost (to the economy) rather than an investment. Public finances came under scrutiny during the adverse social and economic pressures of the 1970s, and funding spent on welfare was not, from this perspective, seen to be making a positive contribution to GDP. Indeed welfare services were deemed to be removing investment from the economy and thereby contributing to its increasing inefficiency. Clarke and Newman (1997, p.14) also observe that in the process of developing this critique as a challenge to the post war consensus the New Right in both Britain and America '...targeted the welfare state as an active agency in the process of national decline, rather than simply an economic drain on the country's resources.' Clarke et al (2000, p.2) add further weight to this debate noting that 'The anti-welfarist element of the New Right treated welfare spending as economically unproductive (a drain on the real economy) and as socially damaging (producing a dependency culture).' Alongside the economic argument, elements of the New Right also perceived the State to interfering in the 'natural workings of market processes- a distorting intrusion.'

In summary this discourse promotes the view that not only are public services inefficient they are also (through their monopolistic status) an intrusion into the workings of the free market.

During this process of modernisation the discourse associated with previous forms of bureaucratic and administrative management was gradually replaced by one, which is more aligned to that of the 'business' world capturing the language of effectiveness and efficiency and at the same time engaging with the growing dominance of neo liberal market driven philosophy. (see for example Pollitt (1993) Clarke & Newman (1997), Clarke et al (2000), Banks (2004) and Newman et al (2005) for a more extensive elaboration of these issues)

This shift in perception of welfare, and the welfare settlement, has profound implications for the state and its relationship to public services. A number of themes emerge from sections 2-4. These can be summarised under three main headings namely modernisation, governance and accountability and are discussed in more detail in the next section. Table 1 (p 22) outlines key emergent interactions.

5) A Web of Consequences.

5.1) The Modernisation of Management

Whilst the provision of adult education and post 18 learning opportunities is not part of mainstream welfare provision, as an integral part of the 'local authority' service offer, this area will be subject to the same overarching shifts in managerial philosophy that have impacted on the local authority and its statutory services. In addition to service specific issues it must be acknowledged that local authorities are themselves subject to scrutiny through, for example, the Corporate Performance Assessment (Audit Commission, 2005) and the more recent proposals to develop Local Area Agreements for service delivery (ODPM, 2004). It would be naïve to assume that service delivery does not have a local culture and its own set of values, behaviours and assumptions and that these remain unchallenged by the managerialist paradigm.

Clarke and Newman (1997, p.22) in discussing what they define as the move towards the 'Managerial State' note the findings of Butcher (1995) who states that - '...a system based upon the practices and values of public administration is being replaced by a new set of practices and values based on a language of welfare delivery which emphasises efficiency and value for money, competition and markets, consumerism and customer care'. Furthermore these systems are separated from the 'content and character' of the services that delivers them. Table 1(p22) illustrates the spectrum of managerial changes that are impacting upon the adult and community education sector. These range from the imposition of a new 'business cycle', that sits outside existing local authority processes, through the development of performance management arrangements and performance indicators that link directly to targets and funding. Quality Assurance (Q/A) arrangements are standardised within the LSC and this is an area that is also subject to the lens of external scrutiny in the form of ALI. The Common Inspection Framework links administrative and support processes, through teaching with eventual learner experience. These standardising influences do not as yet extend to the general curriculum offer but they are applied to more specialised areas such as skills for life (literacy and numeracy) which has its own version of a national curriculum and accompanying testing regime.

The introduction of more business oriented management philosophies according to Clarke et al (2000, p.10) has '...changed the dynamics of power between senior managers and politicians' in the continuum from national to local level. The power of those deemed to be strategic has increased and at the same time changed arrangements offer (national) politicians new means of control at a distance. At local level the assertion of political preference may remain an option, however it will be an option with potential financial and political consequence.

The changes outlined above will bring about a transformation to services, replacing existing (local) approaches with novel programmed interventions. Sennett (1998, p.48) notes that: 'Flexible change which takes aim today at bureaucratic routine, seeks to reinvent institutions decisively and irrevocably, so that the present becomes discontinuous from the past.' This will also be impacted by unintended consequences and unforeseen outcomes emanating

from the initial proposals, as Sennett notes (p48) 'Institutional changes, instead of following the path of a guided arrow, head in different and often conflicting directions....' Given the complexity of existing relationships and the embracing nature of change, it is perhaps not surprising that new arrangements lead to a degree of confusion and uncertainty as organisations strive to reach a new equilibrium.

The term management can be applied throughout the range of organisational relationships that comprise this sector. The Learning and Skills Council has managers, the Local Authority has service managers (developing and delivering the service) and Officers (managing political issues and strategy) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate has a group of inspectors who 'manage' its inspections. Different approaches to management (and managing) as outlined above herald a number of changes at both strategic and operational levels. Changed accountabilities in the sector mean that services are not just accountable to their local authorities but also to the new funding agency, the Learning and Skills Council. Performance measures and new planning processes are being introduced with their attendant cycles of monitoring and evaluation set alongside implications for funding. Newer conceptions of the stakeholder and the customer have a clear and significant impact on previous customers and whilst changes inspired by national policy are to an extent mediated at regional and local level, their potency remains intact

Newman et al (p.130) draw attention to the potential for '--- an increase in the emotional labour required as they (in this case managers) engage with the public and manage the tension and stress points arising at the interface between policy and practice, resources and need...'

As noted above service managers, in particular, may be subject to additional tensions. The local authority will, as I have outlined, have an historical way of working which may have been successful in engaging local people in its (local) learning offer. Its service will (of necessity) be structured and staffed to support this programme. Its Service plans and planning processes will reflect its (local) purpose and the commitment of the local authority to its particular brand of service delivery. Working relationships, built over time may be very effective for this particular purpose. These strategies, structures, cultures and processes that underpin the service may or may not be 'fit for purpose' under the new and changing arrangements. At a very practical level new skills and competencies may be introduced or reinforced whilst at the same time the importance of others may be significantly diminished. For example the rise in importance of Quality Assurance processes (the LSC and ALI exemplify this) and the increasing importance of management information require a range of new skills and (service) capacities which have historically been of marginal importance in the sector.

Managers in the Learning and Skills Council have also acquired a new range of unfamiliar sectoral responsibilities. Alongside more traditional sectors such as Work Based Training and Further Education, Adult Education is a new responsibility requiring different knowledge, expertise, understandings, networks and partnerships. In addition the LSC has a gate-keeping role for the distribution of public funding which extends to the criteria by which that funding is allocated.

As a consequence of changing policy tutors, arguably one of the more important service stakeholders, may find that their cherished and practiced skills are no longer required. Long standing relationships may be terminated or shifted to a different footing. Tutors may also find that their teaching practice, based on years of experience, does not meet the rigors of the Common Inspection Framework and they are now required to: be observed teaching, undertake staff development, complete schemes of work, lesson plans and individual learner records. With the emphasis on the hard to reach groups and the previous non-learner, tutor skills may also need enhancing to meet the needs of proposed target groups. Conversely some tutors will find that their skills are in increasing demand. For example, Skills for Life and Family Learning programmes are an important feature of the new agenda and are strongly aligned with national priorities.

5.2 From Government to Governance

A second emergent theme is that of governance and according to Newman (2005, p.1) 'Governmental power is both retreating – with state institutions being slimmed down, 'hollowed out' decentred and marketised- and (at the same time) expanding, reaching into more and more of citizens' personal lives: for example their decisions about work, health and parenting.' At the same time, partnership groups, community organisations and citizens themselves – are being 'empowered' by those same policy reforms and new 'political spaces' potentially opened up.' Bottery (2004, p.6) also notes '... the paradoxical combination of empowerment for managers to be more entrepreneurial, yet at the same time to implement and come into line with more central directives.' Clarke (2000, p.4) also highlights this paradox when stating that 'The restructuring of the state involved the centralisation of control and direction and at the same time as the decentralisation or dispersal of service provision or delivery'. This circumstance is illustrated by the constraints of funding criteria set against a local government agenda that embraces meeting need at local level.

As highlighted in Table 1 one of the more significant policy interventions is the change in statutory responsibility for the service. This is of particular significance when set alongside other aspects of policy such as target setting and an increasing emphasis on multi agency delivery (including partnership). At national level it is clear that Government continues to set the framework within which policy is both described and implemented. From an Adult Education perspective this is illustrated by a nationalised budget allocated against nationally defined priority groups through the National Skills Strategy. Newman(ed) (2005, p.8) describes the role of the state in this context as 'metagovernance' - setting the rules of the game within which networks operate and steering the overall process of coordination.' This move towards different forms of governance whereby parameters, either in terms of policy, or more indirectly in terms of financial (or other) criteria, are defined at national level and implemented more locally by non governmental agencies is also highlighted by Clarke et al (2000, p. 5) 'Organisational forms of government are tilted increasingly to what Skelcher (1998, quoted in Clarke et al) has called 'quasi-government': the growth of non elected agencies directing and overseeing the spending of public

money and the provision of public services'. The Learning and Skills Council is but one manifestation of this approach.

In the context of this paper the statutory power and duty to secure Adult and Community Education has shifted from local authorities to the Learning and Skills Council. As previously noted, powers and responsibilities that were previously exercised through local government are now discharged through a non-governmental body. However, whilst this may appear to reduce the power of government, removing direct provider status, the framework within which this change takes place ensures that funding is used to further the governments longer term aims and objectives. (See Skills Strategy 2003 and Priorities for Success, 2005))

Dispersal of power in the context of a centralisation of the policy function linked to targets and funding criteria and at the same time promoting an intensification of managerial control through inspection and audit regimes. What Clarke and Newman define as (p.23) 'new forms of control' such as non-elected boards and agencies such as Trusts demonstrate an extension of state power through 'new and unfamiliar means' (p.26) This approach has the effect of changing our previous conception of the state from one form of hierarchical government and replacing it with more differentiated structures. These structures which whilst remaining hierarchical are also characterised by partnership and interagency/network-based coordination. Defining, managing and implementing policy in this way fosters another set of concerns involving those on the receiving end of policy. Newman et al (2005 p.13) note that a lack of coherence in government strategy may '...embody internal contradictions and points of fracture.' giving rise to a sense of policy fragmentation. In this context Newman (p13) highlights the importance of governance through partnership and in particular bottom up participation that stresses participation in the form of engagement, consultation and community. Unfortunately this approach is not universal within implementation structures that define need from a relatively narrow platform of learning deficit and apportion funding in relation to contractual (and target) obligations. Partnership however offers one means of reconciling and re integrating services at local level and in addition has the potential to alleviate duplication and competition thereby promoting a more effective and efficient use of resources.

Local politicians have previously had domain over what has until recently been the local Adult Education Service.. Locally agreed fee policies being but one manifestation of this discretion. This local influence has to a large extent disappeared as the statutory responsibility, along with the funding, has moved to the Learning and Skills Councils. Local discretion to the extent that it does exist will do so only within defined parameters. Whilst local authorities may wish to inject additional funding into local services to meet specific local need the over riding *raison d'être* for the service will remain located in the National Skills Strategy.

National policies for learning and skills may or may not resonate with the views of the local authority in the guise of its elected politicians, the imperative is however to implement policy. There is no local discretion in terms of the learning that the LSC will wish to purchase from the Local Authority. Learning will be directly linked to the National Skills Strategy and LSC funding can only be used

to support that strategy. Regular data returns at pre-determined census dates ensure fidelity between funding allocation and the learner cohort. In some cases this approach may be very much at odds with local practice. For example a local authority may support (historically) a programme that is heavily biased towards the provision of fitness classes. These classes, whilst legitimate under a 'healthy living' or 'social skills' agenda are not overtly integral to the National Skills Strategy. In the future the LSC will determine just how much of this type of provision it commissions through providers such as local authorities. This has significant implication for local politicians in terms of constituency issues and also highlights a tension between policies which for example, promote healthy living and at the same time reduce available funding. Local learners who have an expectation (built up over many years of attendance) that their classes will be maintained, will no doubt have their own perspective.

5.3 Audit and Accountability

Perhaps the most overt manifestation of change is the increasing emphasis on audit functions. In the absence of the previously dominant local bureaucratic structures some intensification of function could be regarded as inevitable. However the role of audit, traditionally concerned with financial fidelity, has also become the means by which (distant) policy makers exercise a degree of implementation (and output) oversight. A less controversial viewpoint would be to see audit as a consequence of policy rather than a policy in its own right.

Clarke (2000, p. 252) offers two conceptions of audit, firstly in representing a new embodiment of the public interest which could be trusted because of its 'independence' and secondly a new form of control enabling government to exercise 'supervision and direction of services that are increasingly being provided by new devolved, decentralised and dispersed organisational forms', for example, the Learning and Skills Council and the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

Bottery (2004, p.193) compares two different styles of audit (after Power, 1994) one qualitative and facilitative the other firmly located in a '...quantitative, low trust, single measure approach' similar to that outlined above and currently the more dominant model. This approach places a heavy reliance on external agencies and at the same time allows 'government to claim effective functioning, both for themselves and the institutions being audited'. In addition this model appears to facilitate the allocation of blame through the publication of reports by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Bottery (p.187) also notes the potential for what he sees as 'the punitive consequences of non compliance', the reverse of this being the opportunity to celebrate success after a successful inspection outcome.

Banks (2004, p.8) states that 'The modern management agenda of the late 1990s and early 2000s in the UK has intensified the accountability demands on the public services'. In being subject to increasing levels of internal and external regulation and audit it would appear that the scope for autonomy in professional decision making and the room for practitioner discretion are being eroded. There is a paradox here. On the one hand new accountabilities and funding criteria appear to promote new practitioner constraints and new barriers whilst on the

other hand there is a cry for innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit in relation to programme design, development and implementation. Clarke et al in discussing the role of audit in the dispersed state argue that (2000 p.254) 'The great attraction of audit and accounting practice is that they appear to reconcile these centrifugal and centripetal forces better than available alternatives.' Audit, according to Power (1993, p.16) quoted in Clarke et al (2000, p.254) '...symbolises a cluster of values: independent validation, efficiency, rationality, visibility almost irrespective of the mechanisms of the practice and, in the final analysis , the promise of control'.

This analysis is compelling, however the increasing reliance on developing accountability through audit functions may also be instrumental in undermining levels of organisational trust. Bottery (p.193) highlights this as a concern. Paradoxically, the breadth of the audit function is resource intensive. Set alongside a managerial agenda premised on the effective and efficient use of resources, the argument becomes somewhat diminished.

Audit relies increasingly on the use of sophisticated ICT systems. Collection and use of information through these systems has additional implications. The overall effect of introducing funding criteria into the sector and attendant oversight through the use of Management Information Systems (MIS) shifts the discretion for decision making and restricts the activity scope of frontline managers. Software systems begin to take on the role of criteria analysis, funding eligibility and budget allocation. Room for discretion exists at the level of the funding agency rather than 'service professional'. This reinforces an earlier point about the diminishing capacity of workers to exercise creativity and to make creative responses to need. Discretion is driven out of the system and the role of public facing staff is changed and mediated through the requirement to re-skill in relation to new circumstances. There is an emergent conflict between previous dispositions and ways of working, values beliefs, organisational culture, and the increasing dominance of the interpretive framework of the new.

Lipsky (1980, p.3) notes that the 'actions of most public service employees constitutes the service delivered' however, as stated above, the scope for flexibility and discretion in relation to the way in which policy is applied is much reduced under funding regimes that are in the first instance targeted and are in addition monitored through information systems that allocate funding at the level of the individual learner. Using the metaphor of the Street Level Bureaucrat (SLB). In these revised circumstances the SLB inputs learner and programme details into a management information system. software. Henceforth funding decisions are computerised and flexibility at local level is mediated through computer software (the rise of software bureaucracy) and not management decisions.

Simon Head (2003, p.164) offers an additional insight in the context of a discussion about the implications of the ICT revolution proposing that the manager's working life becomes increasingly '...visible to the gaze of his superiors.' and notes that for the first time managers (and funding bodies) will be able to monitor activity in 'real time' 'there is no hiding when performance is poor...' recalling Foucault's notion of panoptic power and the induction of a perception of permanent visibility to the extent that ---- once the computer is up and running so too is the possibility of managerial monitoring and control. Whilst

this is an exaggerated position in the current circumstances, the use of management information for the collection of on line and 'real time' data measuring performance against targets is a reality.

Learners are at the centre of this provision and (both current and past) find themselves in an invidious position. From a funding perspective the LSC have re-defined the notion of a learner, that is a learner who attracts a public subsidy. The new 'learner' is a previous non-learner, perhaps best described as a potential learner, someone with a numeracy/literacy need or without a level 2 qualification. The local authority will be accountable, through its contract with the LSC, to deliver learning for the required targeted learner cohort. The traditional service learner, perhaps someone who has been returning to 'the class or a class' for a number of years may find themselves in a position where the class no longer exists or alternatively that fees have doubled. The class may fall outside the priority curriculum areas and the individual learner does may meet the criteria for publicly subsidised learning.

6) Summary

The agenda outlined above is challenging to organisations and individuals at a number of levels. In the first instance there is the change at 'Meta' policy level that has captured the discourse of modernisation through the pervasive ideology of neo liberalism and the subsequent drive to make public services more businesslike and accountable. One significant consequence of this has been an attempt to bring the power of the market to the public sector changing the relationship between 'government' and the means by which services (and policy) are delivered.

In addition and inseparable from the above this transformational agenda has impacted on a wide range of (previously established) relationships both internal and external organisations and it is in this context that I would like to conclude.

Relationships and trust are at the heart of this paper. The most significant issues relate to changing relationships and the way that previous levels of power, influence, skills, competence and flexibility are affected by the change process. This would apply at all levels within the organisation, political, strategic and operational. Transformational change at an ideological level has the power to disrupt and realign both internal and external relationships. Fullan (1991,p.31) quoting Marris (1975) makes the point that all real change involves '...loss, anxiety and struggle.' Accordingly, 'Real change represents a serious personal and collective experience characterised by ambivalence and uncertainty.' This may result in loss for some and personal growth for others. Whilst reaction to change will always be contingent upon the context within which it is enacted it is also clear that in responding to changes driven at national level, which are almost by definition imposed, there exists the potential for a more cynical set of responses which may elicit creative avoidance or more symbolic forms of compliance. The extent to which the proposals challenge existing organisational values, beliefs and practice will be important and organisational culture will play a significant role. Organisations with established, proven and successful ways of working in one context may find some difficulty in accepting the necessity for disruptive and externally imposed change. O'Hara (2004, p.61) notes that '... trust can bring individuals together, particularly when shared values are

embedded in institutions'. Equally differential effects that challenge those values may prove hard to reconcile. The first function of trust, according to O' Hara (p.62) is to '...integrate society by helping people accept that they are all working towards a common goal.' Imposed policies would seem to mitigate against this level of engagement. A similar point is made about the increasing move towards formal contractual arrangements when, according to O' Hara, recent studies have also shown that the development of trust is actually inhibited by binding contracts. 'Where a binding contract governs an exchange, parties tend not to extend trust, leaving the contractual obligations to govern acceptable behaviour in the exchange.' (2004, p.66)

Impositions leading to a threat to or loss of work, changes to job status, or in the case of managers and politicians, changes to levels of service or organisational influence will have significant effects on the change process and on the climate within which the changes are taking place. O Hara (p.60) notes that 'The extent of integration that can be achieved in a society will of course depend on the consistency between the institutions and the values of the individuals.' This point is illustrated by the tension between the increasing tendency towards audit and the language of compliance and the parallel expectation of positive outcomes from trust as proposed by a move towards more integrated, client centred, and consultative partnership working. The question here becomes to what extent does the policy support the development of trust central to successful implementation?

In a service that is ultimately about learning – the question needs to be asked about the extent to which those involved in delivery (service professionals) have been given the opportunity to learn about the new agenda prior to its introduction. Consultation with end users about need must surely be matched with a reciprocal level of consultation with service professionals and other stakeholders about the efficacy and practicality of policy.

Whilst Fullan (2003, p.22) notes that unpredictability can be a welcome stimulus that promotes novelty and innovation it can also feed dissent, unrest, prejudice and avoidance. Fullan also stresses that '...ownership of the problem and the solution must be within the system' proposing that intrinsic motivation may be a casualty of imposed change.

Taking the matter of commitment and loyalty a step further Sennett (1999, p.24) points out that: 'No long term...' is a principle which erodes trust, loyalty and mutual commitment. The rise of short-term funding and formal contracts illustrate this circumstance, uncertainty and ambiguity adds to the drama. Trust can also be a formal matter, a question of a contract or a written agreement. However, as Sennett (p.24) notes, '...deeper experiences of trust are more informal, as when people learn on whom they can rely when given a difficult or impossible task. Such social bonds take time to develop, slowly rooting in the cracks and crevices of organisations.' Stronger ties that depend on longer-term association are put at risk during periods of uncertainty and restructure. Sennett (p25) reinforces the link between change and potentially dissonant behaviours noting that: 'Detachment and superficial cooperativeness are better armour for dealing with current realities than behaviour based on values, loyalty and service'.

There remains a certain irony in the above, and in particular in link being forged between learning and economic growth. Fukuyama (1995) for example argues that different rates of economic expansion between nations can be considered in terms levels of trust (p.7) '... one of the most important lessons we can learn from an examination of economic life is that a nations well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in society'.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in its 10 year vision for local government (2004, p.14) places a heavy emphasis on trust. 'Our vision is: greater participation by people in decisions that affect them locally, leading to services which better match the needs and preferences of communities. This requires: building trust that engagement makes a difference, offering new opportunities to engage, particularly for those who have not felt empowered'.

If we consider that trust, at one level or another may be one of the casualties of managerialism and its attendant consequences then we have a circumstance where the potential policy outcomes are undermined by the methodology of policy implementation.

Paradoxically as we intensify our efforts to facilitate inclusion, to enable and ensure access to learning, to promote learning in the cause of social and economic regeneration then we do need to pause and consider the extent to which our efforts to date actually undermine the very circumstances that we are attempting to promote.

Amongst the apparent fragmentation and ambiguity of policy, developments in local government appear to offer a remedial route. For example the ODPM (2004) document 'The future of local government: Developing a 10 year vision', places an emphasis on the strategic and coordinating role of local authorities, echoing the need for coherence and a degree of reintegration at local level, in the creation of sustainable communities (p.8) '...places where people want to live and that promote opportunity and a better quality of life for all.' Local government must (p.9):

- involve local communities,
- find innovative and joined up solutions to specific local problems,
- coordinate delivery
- combine good management with strong accountability,
- join up and balance competing demands.

This range of responsibilities is supported through Corporate Performance Assessment undertaken by the Audit Commission (2005) and reinforced through the development of Local Area Agreements, ODPM (2004).

Whilst there remains a danger as Bottery (2004, p31) notes of a '...world stripped of local meaning' by an intensification of national (if not global) policy templates and efficiency mandates, there may also be, in the chaos of disruption, an opportunity to reinvigorate local democracy and civic engagement through the development of more authentic forms of engagement and consultation at local and community level.

Table 1

Theme	Impacts
The Modernisation of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the Learning and Skills Councils 'Business Cycle' into the local authority sector. Including the 1 Year Rolling Plan, the Quality Improvement Plan and the Self Assessment Report • Intensification of Performance Management through targets linked to funding and in year adjustment. • Introduction of standardised Quality Assurance processes across the sector • Standardisation of performance Management through the LSC and ALI • Definition of need, legitimate learning and legitimate learners • Curriculum definition • Formalised contractual arrangements
From Government to Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of the statutory 'duty' to secure provision from local government and location with the Learning and Skills Councils. • Promotion of national targets at local level through non governmental body • Increasing emphasis on working in partnership and with other agencies including the voluntary sector. • Increasing emphasis on 'learner' and community consultation
Audit and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional audit process via the LSC against grant conditions • Additional external audit • Specific targets and reporting mechanisms via monthly update and census dates • Annual Individual Learner Record return (ILR) • Publication of Inspection Reports • Necessity of MIS software • Risk Analysis by LSC of Local Authority plans and targets

Table 2

Theme	Potential Impacts On
Modernisation of Management	<p>Culture (Organisation and Service) Structure (Service) Strategy (Service & Organisational issues) Processes (Service and Organisation) Link also to external stakeholders and partners</p>
From Government to Governance	<p>Strategy (Service and Organisation) Asserts new contractual arrangements and also defines a range of changing Political (and political) relationships at management and organisational level. Partnership and collaborative arrangements</p>
Audit and Accountability	<p>Structure (Service in the first instance) Organisation in terms of 'reputation' and established audit cycles Cultural (Service) Strategy (Service – may also be distorted due to focus on meeting audit requirements) Processes (Service and challenge to Organisational practice)</p>

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Learning, Learning Communities and Globalisation: Policy Development and Its Impact on Implementation

Dr Ray Shore

Introduction

The phenomenon we now describe as globalisation permeates the contemporary discourse about social policy. The language of globalisation features in much of the public debate about the state of the world from the volatility of the world's financial markets through concerns about the environment and wider debates about public health, poverty and more recently global terrorism.

The pervasiveness of globalisation and its influence is particularly evident in the resurgence of interest in environmental issues and climate change and also in the universal scramble for economic success through workforce development. A well-educated flexible, learning workforce has become one of the more generic solutions to establishing a continuing presence in the global market.

Learning and continuous learning are a policy solution for sustaining future economic success. The benefits of learning from an individualised economic perspective are well established. Policy makers however, are also aligning learning with both social and community regeneration.

This assignment offers an analysis of the policy imperative from the perspective of global drivers and moves on to discuss the centrality of learning to both social and economic regeneration. It then argues, through the discussion of a 'learning communities' solution, that an understanding of purpose (of learning and of learning communities as a concept) is from the outset an integral and fundamental part of the policy process; and that whilst social and economic benefits of learning are not mutually exclusive, the pursuit of economic benefit may not be the most appropriate route to expressed social outcomes.

The Global Context

In developing a debate about the links between education and economic growth, Wolf (2002, p.1) asserts that at the start of the 21st Century we inhabit a world in the grip of consensus 'The world's voters think their governments can and should deliver economic prosperity. Their elites agree with them and even agree with each other how to do it. Increasingly they sign up to the same package; free trade, market economics, the virtues of entrepreneurship and education, education, education'.

The universality and high level of consensus about this range of policy imperatives provides a vivid illustration of the phenomenon termed globalisation, or as Giddens, quoted in Field (2000, p.19) notes '...in the tendency towards globalisation'.

Drucker (1995) has proposed that we are no longer living in a period when we could continue to speak about 'western history' and 'western civilisation' but that we were moving into a time where the notion of 'world history' and a 'world civilisation' would dominate our thinking. Drucker (1995, p.67) argues that 'every few hundred years throughout western history, a sharp transformation has occurred. In a matter of a few decades, society altogether rearranges itself—its world view, its basic values, its social and political structures, its arts and its key institutions. Fifty years later a new world exists'.

Given the apparent all embracing nature of globalisation and the rapidity of technological change, Drucker's timescales seem somewhat pessimistic. There is an ongoing debate about the scope, nature, pervasiveness and importance of globalising influences. What seems clear however is that with the onset of rapid, reliable and accessible communications technology the world is becoming smaller. Incidents taking place in one part of the world are rapidly communicated across the globe. Our familiarity with the metaphor of the butterfly's wings embedded within the discourse of chaos theory is readily transferable to the reality of the world's financial markets. Anxiety and uncertainty in one part of the world exerts an immediate and causal effect across the globe. The fuel crisis in the early 70s, and the ecological disasters of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, provided a stark and demonstrable illustration that the world had become more aware of the global interconnectedness that is implicit in the term 'globalisation'.

In an expansion of his concept of McDonaldisation, Ritzer (2004, p.160) defines globalisation as '...the worldwide diffusion of practices, expansion of relations across continents, organisation of social life on a global scale, and the growth of a shared global consciousness'. The idea of a rising global consciousness is most apparent through the increasing evidence of a global voice about environmental concern or the rising tide of protest that accompanies the inter-governmental meetings of the G8.

In addition Ritzer (2004, p.147) develops the idea of homogenisation to describe the almost universal availability of a number of well-known products and brands. McDonalds, for example, is known and recognised the world over, its products

are standardised across the globe. In the same way governments across the world are developing policy responses to a range of problems, learning being one of the more prominent and universal policy areas.

The Policy Response.

Learning, as an issue for policy, at global, national and local levels is in the ascendancy across the whole of the developed world and increasingly seen as fundamental to progress in the developing world. See Holford et al (1998), Longworth (1999), Field (2000), and Field (ed) (2002). From the perspective of problem identification there is a degree of convergence about the issue. Parsons (1995, p.243) terms this 'a convergence of concerns', the concern in this case being global competitiveness. The policy response however, is another matter and there are no universal solutions on the horizon, although the power and pervasiveness of the discourse and the clarity of the policy imperative remain contextually significant. Parsons (1995, p.242) whilst highlighting a globalising influence in relation to agenda setting also states: '... the fact remains that the power of decision and the capacity and will to implement remains largely located within nation states'. Bottery (2004, p.50) cites a degree of resistance in some Continental European countries to the prevailing neo liberal market philosophy, highlighting freedoms and flexibilities at national level when stating that; 'It is important to point out ... that these movements and forces (global in scope) are both culturally and nationally mediated'.

In the introduction to White paper The Learning Age (DfEE 1998), David Blunkett, at the time Secretary of State for Education, wrote in both eloquent and emotive language of the centrality of (lifelong) learning in a modern democratic society. Blunkett's writing in the context of a rapidly changing (global) world gave prominence to links between both social and economic agendas; embracing the idea of learning linked to economic growth and at the same time developing a clear rationale for the positive benefits of learning in a broader social and community context. The following quote from Blunkett (DfEE 1998, p.7) illustrates this point.

'To cope with rapid change and the challenge of the information and communication age, we must ensure that people can return to learning throughout their lives. We cannot rely on a small elite, no matter how highly educated or highly paid. Instead we need the creativity, enterprise and scholarship of all our people. As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps to fulfil our potential and open doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as for the equality of opportunity it brings'.

This statement not only raises the issue of rapid change but also binds both social and economic prosperity to citizenship, community and above all learning. Learning becomes an issue that underpins a key policy aim i.e. that of creating a civilised society. I will return to this point later in this assignment.

As previously noted on page 2 of this assignment there is an assumption that one of the roles and responsibilities of government is to ensure the provision of circumstances that deliver economic success. Alongside this there is also a very strong political and policy discourse supporting the link between education and economic prosperity. Wolf (2002, p.5) states this in very strong terms asserting that '... the belief in education for growth runs deep and wide beyond our political classes, replacing socialism as the great secular faith of our age'. The links between public policy on learning and the notion of economic success have become bound together to the extent that, as Wolf (2002, p.13) points out 'in the process we have almost forgotten that education ever had any purpose other than to promote growth'. This idea has become a key driver and justification for the intensification of government involvement in this particular policy arena. If, as stated above, fostering economic success and bringing the benefits thereof to its people is a legitimate area for Government involvement then, the argument continues, Government must surely be interested in the well established and almost incontestable rhetoric of a link between the two. Whilst governments may not necessarily move beyond the rhetoric of the prevailing discourse in order to elucidate and develop a coherent vision for learning, they are most certainly interested in the potential attendant outcomes.

Parsons (1995,p.87) promotes the idea that the 'genesis of a policy involves the recognition of a problem'. The recognition of this problem legitimates the arena as one in which government can (and should) become involved. In addition the discourse surrounding the generation of the issue may also define the parameters within which the 'problem' is addressed and within which the policy is ultimately framed. Thus in terms of generating policy about learning where do we look for the problem?

To an extent the problem is located in the globalising agenda previously outlined and the proposal that in order to ensure a successful economy we need a flexible highly skilled, well-motivated workforce. The economy of Great Britain, whilst currently seen as relatively successful, is in terms of the international community under performing. Our qualifications and skills base remains somewhat impoverished. This apparent lack of a competitive learning edge provides both the legitimising rationale and the 'issue energy' for policy development. The Corporate Plan for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC September, 2003) notes that:

'Of all the OECD countries, only Mexico and Turkey have fewer 16-18 year olds in education and training than we do. An estimated one in five adults in the United Kingdom has difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy...approximately 30% of our workforce is qualified to an intermediate skill level (considered to be a measure of employability) compared with 51% in France and 65% in Germany'.

Government having acknowledged the existence of this problem must be seen to act. Inactivity would provide a very visible message to competitor nations and potential investors. Failure to address the acknowledged skills deficit by implementing remedial policies would signal a nation resigned to its destiny as a low skills economy. For those wishing to invest in this country as a base for future production, or as a home for purely financial investment, a failure to fill this policy vacuum would provide a powerful statement of intent (or in this case

a lack of intent). The problem as outlined above therefore becomes the legitimate territory for policy formulation.

I have previously mentioned that the discourse surrounding policy may limit some of the policy parameters. Parsons (1995, p.89) also notes that 'the way in which we define a problem has a crucial impact on the policy response'. If for example the 'problem', in terms of learning, is defined as being a low skills base, the answer becomes one of providing a means by which the low skills base can be raised. Along with other nations facing similar issues, the solution becomes one that is linked directly to the provision of more learning focused on the workforce and the 'skills required by industry' in a competitive global economy. This is a structural response to a perceived structural problem. An alternative approach would be to consider learning from a broader philosophical base or begin to approach the issue from an entirely social perspective perhaps giving prominence to citizenship.

At one level this somewhat instrumentalist approach is compelling, its simplicity and familiarity are readily understood and implementation does not therefore present the potential destabilising risk of the unknown or unfamiliar. From a different perspective it offers a linear and positivist solution to a (perceived) problem and at the same time has the effect of discouraging any challenges that may re define the problem or that may elicit alternative proposals to the existing (policy) solution. Whilst Parsons (1995, p.17) proposes that '.. in order to develop better policy governments need better information', it seems clear that the source of that information and the means by which it is gathered are a significant influence. If, for example, the initial policy premise is fragile and its justification somewhat tenuous then the information collected in its name will, almost inevitably, reinforce the same pattern.

This approach is illustrated in the information used to support the government's consultation on the 21st Century Skills Strategy (TSO 2003) stated that:

'Output per hour worked is 25 per cent higher in the US and Germany and over 30% higher in France than in the UK. While we compare well at higher education level, our percentage of the workforce qualified to intermediate skill levels is low: 28 per cent in the UK compared with 51 per cent in France and 65 per cent in Germany'.

This focus on quantitative data illustrates a narrow and somewhat instrumental approach to understanding a complex phenomenon i.e. the relationship between economic output at a national level and workforce qualifications/skills base. Field (2000, p.21) proposes that in the arena of lifelong learning, even given the very favourable policy climate, there has been 'a failure to generate much that is new or innovative in terms of specific policy measures' and that measures themselves are focused, almost universally, on one single area, this being '...interventions designed to improve the skills and flexibility of the workforce'.

Field also consolidates the globalised origins of this policy asserting that (2000, p.3) '... public policy tends to be driven, globally, by largely economic concerns: competitiveness, rather than citizenship, is the primary focus for policy'.

Perhaps, and in pursuit of a solution to a particular problem, we are addressing the issue in a way that becomes almost self-defeating. If our understanding of the issue, our definition of the policy context is partial, perhaps even misguided, then supporting research in the form of the policy process and the ensuing policy solution may be equally superficial.

The assignment thus far has offered an analysis of global influences upon the policy arena and in particular focused on national policy related to adult learning. The next section moves on to discuss two particular approaches to a purpose for learning these being 'lifelong learning' and 'lifelong education'. Whilst the terms are often used interchangeably they carry with them quite different sets of assumptions.

The Centrality of Learning

Faure (1972) describes the conditions for the development of a 'learning society' and learning in society in terms of the integration of the age of participants and context within which learning takes place. Thus to achieve a learning society, learning should take place in a range of formal and informal settings and engage across the whole of the age cohort. In this context learning becomes an arena for citizenship and participation. This discourse, according to Boshier (1998, p.13, quoted in Holford et al), is one of education.

The Learning Age (DfEE,1998, p.7) outlines the contribution that learning can make to both social and economic prosperity supporting the development of a 'civilised society' and promoting active citizenship. In addition there are equally strong links to the role of learning in community development, strengthening the family and promoting access to the arts and literature.

The strongest connections in the Learning Age are those which echo the relationship between learning and global economic prosperity. As a generalisation this approach exemplifies the idea of a learning market. In this context undertaking a learning episode becomes a rational decision taken by the learner. The sum total of these individual decisions becomes the impact of policy. This is according to Boshier (1998, p.12) the discourse of 'lifelong learning'

In many publications the language of learning and that of education are used almost interchangeably. However in the context of the two publications above, learning and education, represent quite different perspectives which, to an extent, illustrate the question that is central to this paper i.e. that purpose of policy and the approach to policy development and implementation are inextricably linked.

Boshier (1998, p.8), in an article reflecting on the 25 years since Faure, summarises the tensions between these views as follows:

'Practitioners should be wary because lifelong learning denotes a less emancipatory and more oppressive set of relationships than does lifelong education. Lifelong learning discourses tend to render social conditions invisible. Predatory capitalism is unproblematic. Lifelong learning is nested in vocationalism. Learning is for acquiring skills that will enable the learner to

work harder, faster and smarter and, as such, enable their employer to better compete in the global economy’.

On the one hand education is seen as emancipatory, a route to freedom and choice, and on the other primacy is given to the skills required to sustain a successful and competitive economy. The needs of the business community and of the economy seemingly merit a higher value than those of the individual.

Accepting the idea that learning and success in learning can have positive implications for the individual is not problematic. I have alluded to this at an earlier point in this paper. There is a positive association between time spent in learning and future earning power. Wolf (2002, p.15) notes that:

‘Whether or not education is financially good for their country, the past half century teaches that it is certainly good for the educated. The more education you acquire, the higher your income is likely to be, and the less likely you are to experience long periods of long or even short term unemployment’.

From a policy perspective and in the context of sustaining a highly skilled and flexible workforce able to compete in a global economy, encouraging and embedding the notion of lifelong learning would appear to be essential

Successful learners are not only better off financially, they are more engaged and more connected. Successful learners are more likely to engage in learning in the future. Those who are not so successful illustrate a different picture. Only half the adults with poor literacy skills have a job compared to four out of five adults with the best literacy skills.

The terminal age of initial education is also a key and consistent predictor of participation in learning as an adult. Sargant (2002, p. xiv) states that ‘Seventy eight percent of those who are current learners are likely to take up learning in the future. Whilst only 13% of those who have not participated since leaving full time education expect to participate in future learning’.

Whilst the policy focus is on workforce development and the economy we have already noted that there is also a social context. This social context aligns learning with the a wider notion of a civilised society embracing social regeneration, community and the arts.

Given this tentative elaboration of purpose what are the imperatives for implementation and change? One of the policy solutions proffered by government is the development of learning communities. This proposal features in 21st Century Skills Strategy (TSO, 2003, p.105) and is worthy of further examination.

Learning Communities.

Griffin (in Holford et al 1998, p.22) states that:

'As in the case of other desirable social objectives there is often a perceived gap between the ideal and the reality, the theory and the practice, the promise and the performance.'

Ivan Lewis notes (2004, p.12) that "learning communities" is a concept whose time has come. This statement echoes that attached to a number of related, and from this perspective, linked themes. The learning society for example could sit adjacent to the notion of learning cultures and could also be seen as the overarching outcome from the development of learning communities. According to the Longworth (1999, p.109). a Learning Community is: ' a city, town or region which mobilizes all its resources in every sector to develop and enrich all its human potential for the fostering of personal growth, the maintenance of social cohesion and the creation of prosperity'.

Again the link between social and economic issues is central. The term learning community also offers something of a comfort zone. There is a synergy between the two words and a sense of added value in the combination of learning and community. Learning and the idea of continuous learning is seen as beneficial to both the individual and, in the context of economic competitiveness and social cohesion, to society as a whole. Boshier (1998, p.4) suggests that :

'there is considerable enthusiasm for learning (lifelong) which, in its most exaggerated or utopian elaborations, is touted as the New Jerusalem which leads to a bountiful and promised land'.

The term community can itself have a number of meanings ranging from the defined geographical area in which people live, through groups that share common cultures, race, ethnicity or religion or group with common interests and concerns such as sporting interests or political beliefs. Meanings also overlap. The defined geographical area may also be the location of a particular culture, ethnic group or disadvantaged community. Importantly the term itself may offer benevolent or malevolent undertones—i.e. some communities may be malevolent – others may be exclusive.

Putnam's (2000) analysis of community and the range of support and affiliation potentials within communities offer insights about the mutual obligations that are generated and sustained through social networks. For example Putnam proposes (2000.p. 20) that : 'social networks are important in all our lives, often for finding jobs, more often for finding a helping hand, companionship or a shoulder to cry on' and also for '...the rules of conduct and mutual obligations they sustain'.

Learning communities, as a concept, can appeal to a range of different groups for quite different reasons. Policy makers and politicians can link the idea to the flexible and dynamic economy required to be competitive in the globalised market place of the 21st Century. Learning community can also be linked to the regeneration of social capital, community networks and some of the more intrinsic and democratic aspects of learning.

Thompson (2002, p.9) in a booklet designed for community learning practitioners describes community in the following terms:

'Community is a word that unlike group, area or neighbourhood has a tremendous feel-good factor associated with it. Community is about feeling secure, being on the same wavelength...being able to count on each other especially if you are poor or a member of a relatively powerless minority'.

Similar assertions have previously been made about lifelong learning to the point that its benefits and worth are almost without challenge. Who, for example, would disagree with the statement that 'Learning Pays' and who would contest the benefits of 'community'?

A Question of purpose

Ivan Lewis, in his role as Parliamentary Undersecretary for Skills and Vocational Education, links learning and community within the context of relative exclusion and the need for honesty about the immensity of the restructuring taking place in the world.

Lewis believes there is a need to raise the status of learning in communities in which low aspirations are endemic. In an article published in *Adults Learning* (2004, p.12) he observes that: 'People trapped in these circumstances need to feel that they are members of a learning community right down to the affiliation and recognition of a membership card'.

'You can get better leadership, better support.. but if you don't tackle the fact that in many areas there is a sort of culture of low aspiration which permeates that community in every sense there will always be a glass ceiling in terms of what you are able to do to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential'.

Thus, by developing and implementing the concept of the learning community, aspirations are raised and the idea of learning becomes part of a way of living, '...ingrained in the psyche of every individual, family and community, every workplace'. Lewis (2004, p.12) The Learning Community in this context becomes the answer, not only to economic success, but also to exclusion, social division and regeneration.

Individuals working together, share success and gradually build networks and confidence within the community. Success may increase individual and community esteem, having the effect of lifting the collective aspirations of the whole 'community'.

By encouraging learning and developing and sharing approaches to learning individuals and groups of individuals achieve success. The extent to which these successes are shared and celebrated, the extent to which supportive networks are formed and the extent to which the knowledge gained by individuals is then transferred into the community, for mutual benefit, is a measure of the success of this approach to the development of a learning community.

The diversity of potential approaches to the concept of learning communities mirrors the equally diverse range of potential routes to implementation. The following two extremes on the implementation continuum are offered by way of illustration.

Approach 1 (a target driven market forces approach)

One approach that appears to have gained favour, is to parachute the learning solution into a community with a high profile 'funding defined' initiative. In this case the funding body and its agencies become the source of the initiative. The community is, at some point, invited to participate in the development of a learning community, the needs led aspect of this approach being defined by the funding agency. The needs of the individuals within the community are in reality defined by the perceptions (and targets) of the funding body. Needs become a function of potential funding streams, external and short term. Access to opportunity becomes a function of what is fundable, formulaic and reductive. For example if the perception is that of high unemployment then employability skills would be defined as a need, employability skills and the supporting curriculum would become the solution. The focus of the learning community becomes vocational learning

The targets of the funding body are transferred as a deficit into a prescribed model of a learning community.. In this circumstance, the solution is 'my' solution for 'your' future. Once the initial pump priming period is completed ownership of the 'learning community' is 'transferred' back to the community.

I would relate this approach to the more market driven models for learning where need purports to relate to the individual and is often championed as such. In reality however need is institutionally located. Definition of need at individual and community level takes place within a context defined outside the community. There is little doubt that in a world of short term funding and funding driven targets this approach can (indeed will) be successful. Evidence will be collected, targets will be met, the programme evaluated and success announced in an appropriate and timely way

Approach 2 (a social inclusion model)

A second approach would be to adopt a lower key, ground up process, working with existing community groups, perhaps in a multi agency setting. This would facilitate building coalitions and relationships from existing budding points, developing the discourse over time, and building confidence, trust and esteem between individuals and groups within a given community. This would entail working in the communities with greatest need and working with the individuals with greatest need. These processes are by definition slow. Building cohesion, building social capital and facilitating the development of learning opportunities, which, for want of a better description, are needs led, needs driven and based on the emergent individual and community aspirations.

This is not a short-term cyclical imperative, but a longer-term approach based on a vision that embraces and encourages inclusion, participation and sustainability. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) points out that successful regeneration involves working with communities and not parachuting in solutions, not giving our solutions to your future. (1998, p. 40) ' For local regeneration to be effective communities need to be involved. Too often the notion of community involvement is given cursory attention whilst the pressures to implement policies quickly have meant that bureaucrats fall back on their own assumptions rather than consulting the community'.

Change in this context becomes a mirror of the learning process. Change is about learning and in particular being given the opportunity to learn new meanings, and importantly, an understanding of choice and personal responsibility. The opportunity to learn is part of the process by which the learning community develops. Learning becomes intrinsic to individual and community development. There is a degree of consistency between purpose and the methods by which that purpose is taken forward and implemented. The community itself is part of the reflexive learning experience and as it learns, changes. Ranson (1998, p.255) ' a learning society (and community) is one which has to learn to become a different form of society (community) if it is to shape the transformation that it is experiencing'.

Summary

The policy of 'learning communities' has been traced from the influence of drivers linked to ideas inherent in the notion of globalisation through the importance of learning within the discourse about successful global economies and the workforce qualities required for development and sustenance. Learning in the context of a deficit is cast as a problem and becomes legitimate territory for policy formulation.

The idea that learning is important to future economic development has become almost universal. The solution of more learning is equally dominant. However within this discourse there is choice about a number of things perhaps the most fundamental being the purpose of the learning that is being promoted.

A second and linked choice then becomes the type of learning that we validate in support of the economic/social agenda. Paradoxically many of the qualities that we highlight as desirable relate to the more social aspects of learning. Many of the benefits of learning are couched in terms of social and community regeneration, citizenship and the notion of a civil society. Yet the policy drive, its implementation and funding framework remain firmly embedded in a model based on economic benefits, a market forces paradigm. The language of policy as I have described outlines a more unified and integrated approach.

The concept of learning communities clearly has utility when attached and aligned to purpose. The government's current approach appears to define that purpose in relation to reducing disadvantage and raising achievement and aspiration. However the means by which this policy is implemented translate into

actions and experiences that link directly to a very narrow definition of learning linked, almost exclusively, to workforce development.

In practice when the concept of learning communities is applied in this way the dominant approach to implementation is best described as a deficit model. In these circumstances 'learning deficits' within an identified community (or society) are corrected by the imposition of externally validated learning solutions. The initial learning deficit may also be the trigger for the identification of a 'problem' that then requires a policy solution. Solutions are imposed on communities and the individuals within those communities. Current funding models are inflexible, perhaps even blind to individual and social contexts and tend therefore exacerbate the notion of a deficit. Yet policy, as it is written and outlined, supports individual and community need and best practice would appear to define a clear and important role for democratic engagement.

Purpose and an understanding of purpose are key aspects of this debate. In order to achieve sustained and sustainable change that makes a difference to the lives of individuals and communities, models that are genuinely needs based and which promote local democracy, community ownership and engagement from the outset appear more likely to be successful.

Models of learning communities based on external validation of need and which, to that extent, lack integrity, authenticity and consonance will, almost by definition, have the effect of reinforcing the status quo --- on the way to meeting high quality, world beating targets.

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Special Issue on Lifelong Learners

Back to the Future? - Lifelong learning in libraries

Andrew Hudson

Libraries were originally set up in Victorian times as a means of educating the masses and were regarded as working class institutions. They developed often from the Mechanics institutes, which were working class institutions established by the more affluent sections of the working class. When he proposed the Public Libraries Act, William Ewart presented the case for libraries as means for economic embetterment of the working classes (1). There was however a patronising element in public library provision as they were regarded as being for the working classes which lead them to being regarded as being akin to soup kitchens, baths and washhouses and some authors have regarded public library provision as a form of social control (2).

Returns from records of parliamentary returns for 1876-77 show predominantly working class readership (3) and, in the few case where sex and age were recorded, a substantial proportion of readers were young men and boys. By 1946 surveys started to show the readership as being young and middle class the late 1930's this began to change and by 1962-63 surveys were showing an increasingly middle class membership (4) Kelly 383-386. Nowadays libraries tend to be used by a predominantly middle class female membership with heavy usage in the over 60's. Children's reading schemes are now being proposed to encourage boys reading

They are also being increasingly used for recreational reading with some authorities giving priority to satisfying demands for best sellers, promotional reads, chic lit, which in an era of scarce resources is competing with the educational and information role of libraries. My own analysis of issues in Waltham Forest suggest that the percentage of fiction books issued tended to be greater in the white middle class residential parts of the borough and the use of GCSE textbooks a lot lower suggesting that it was amongst the less affluent where there was a demand for the educational role of the library (5). However other factors may be involved such as age and ethnicity as there are a

considerably higher proportion of retired people in the residential areas. Also the borough borders Essex and it may be that there is a lower proportion of professional middle class people than in a lot of residential areas and a higher proportion of small business owners, shopkeepers and managers in trades rather than professionals than in part of West London.

In emphasising the role of lifelong learning we are effectively going back to the future. In Victorian times there was an ethos of hope. Social reform was coming with free education, the widening of the franchise and the growth of the trade unions and cooperative movement. Social mobility was starting to occur and gradually increased during the first eighty years of the twentieth century with the reforms of the 1906 Liberal and 1945 Labour governments, the expansion of higher education and the Open University. This continued until the Thatcher era and the end of the Post War Consensus.

Since then social divisions have widened. Two areas in particular where social mobility is restricted are housing and education. The introduction of student loans and tuition fees has turned the clock back in higher education to the pre war period where access was predominantly by people who could afford the fees. Large numbers of people who could benefit from higher education will miss out and there will be a need to access knowledge. There is a pressure for the return to more selection in secondary education. Selection means increased opportunity for some but exclusion for others. The 1944 education act did increase opportunities for people from working class background and represented progress but the number of grammar school places was usually less than the number of people able to benefit from them. Comprehensive education was a further expansion of opportunities. Bringing back examinations such as the eleven plus will be a step backwards. Recently a report by Bristol University concluded that working class children in Britain were less likely to climb the social ladder than in any other developed nation (6). Never before has the role of the library as the people's university been more necessary.

Perhaps most importantly the library was one of the first forms of open learning and has the potential to remain an open learning institution rather than providing programmed learning for a production line educational system of testing and cramming for exams.

However the role is under threat. There has been large-scale removal of stock from shelves although this has not always been unjustified. In going through some old stock in a store in a library in East London, I came across some books that last issued before the Olympics last came to London. A lot of stock hadn't issued for years and its subject content was out of date but not everything. There is a need for in depth coverage of subjects and in some fields particularly the social sciences there are classic texts that provide evidence of social conditions in the past such as the works of Booth and Mayhew or Margaret Mead even if they are largely anecdotal theoretical texts such as Marx, Malthus and Adam Smith. It is necessary to study social attitudes of the past to see where we are going as ideas evolve. Fiction also provides an important record of social attitudes and conditions in a way that official statistics can't, as does oral history.

We should be wary of adopting a censorial role particularly with works written a long time ago. Apart from anything else they can provide valuable insight into how views have evolved. Were we to put a total ban on anything racist or sexist then sacred texts such as the Bible and Koran would be prohibited and probably a lot of literature and the terminology used by Booker T Washington is no longer acceptable. Jack London held some repulsively racist views however *People of the Abyss*, which is an important account of conditions in East London and *Iron Heel*, is a dystopia written long before 1984. Banning Holocaust denial merely gives it credence. Holocaust deniers are about as plausible as Flat Earthers although arguably more dangerous but are they any more dangerous than evolution deniers. It is also necessary to have access to ideas to successfully challenge them. As George Santayana said, "Those who would forget the past are condemned to repeat it" (7).

A mass cull of stock is not the best way to bring about a renaissance of open learning. However a lot of the defenders of a traditional library service make a large mistake is to oppose computers in libraries. CDs, DVDs are arguably recreational features the Internet is not.

Information and knowledge is becoming increasingly available on line sometimes only available on line. If we fail to take this on board, libraries will gradually lose their informational role, and ultimately their educational role. Also unlike DVDs and CDs, computers should be a core service with basic access being free and open otherwise we are effectively placing taxes and barriers on knowledge. We do not demand residence for using a reference library so why demand it for the Internet? Charging should be for print outs, which should be treated, like photocopying for charging and for copyright purposes. This needs legislation, as there are still some local authorities where backwoodsmen have yet to realise that Internet charges are restricting access to knowledge. There is a danger of the Internet becoming the equivalent of libraries before the advent of open access.

Although I am arguing for a return to Victorian values I have a rather different view of them than Margaret Thatcher who failed to appreciate that the Victorian age was one of reforms and municipalisation and collectivism and not a purely *laissez faire* approach and Samuel Smiles and self help. Lifelong learning is a form of self-help but of a more practical variety than the Samuel Smiles variety, which suggested that people could improve their lot by emulating the lives of famous people. Whilst a handful of people from working or lower middle class background undoubtedly could achieve fame and fortune they were the exception to the rule and were more likely to achieve it by an element of good luck and their own route rather than emulating others. There was however another form of self-help where groups or communities of people have combined to improve their conditions. Self help for people who like the American railroad brotherhood leader Eugene Debs, want to rise with the ranks rather than from the ranks. In the nineteenth century there was the trade union movement, the coop and although they have now become banks and largely demutualised, the building societies. There were forms of self help provided by faith communities. There were also miner's libraries in South Wales in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries (8). I would also not advocate seeking for funding from philanthropists as occurred in the nineteenth century. Whilst some benefactors such as Passmore Edwards appear to have been largely

philanthropic, others were more contentious. Andrew Carnegie who had initially claimed to support the rights of the working man appointed a union busting manager to run his steel mill in Holmstead Pennsylvania resulting in a violent strike during which several people were killed whilst Henry Tate who funded the central library in Brixton, a branch library in Lambeth and provided the site for a library in Streatham did it from family fortunes that had been gained from slavery in sugar plantations. Communities should not have to rely on the favour of a handful of individuals however enlightened they may be for services. In supporting lifelong learning, libraries can encourage self-help both for individuals and groups. For individuals libraries can provide means of increasing employability through books in preparing for interviews and CVs and through enhancing literacy and numeracy and IT skills. They can also provide materials for learning English as an additional language to facilitate the needs of migrant workers. The country of origin and levels of migration will vary but the need is likely to remain. It is important to emphasise the role of Open learning in that public libraries are essentially enablers rather than part of any formal teaching and that people can learn at their own pace. This is important in the age of performance monitoring that is turning the formal education into a production line through SATs and the national curriculum. There is a danger of programmed learning and concentration on examination technique reducing the capacity to think critically. This does not mean a *laisse faire* approach. We can still provide reading lists and promotions.

They can also be involved in collective self help through supporting groups such as Saturday Schools, homework clubs, tenants association and workers cooperatives. We should concentrate on addressing need for example readers groups unless they are reaching out to hard to reach groups are we merely providing a forum for middle class people to discuss books which they are likely to read anyway?

One area where libraries can assist in lifelong learning is through the traditional area of local history where local people can not only learn but also contribute to knowledge. Local history is traditionally seen as a largely white middle class activity but it needn't. In the seventies labour history became increasingly recognised as a part of local history. More recently, authors such as Steve Martin and Peter Ashan have helped develop local black history. It is now sixty years since the arrival of the **Empire Windrush** and there are areas where there has been a black presence since the eighteenth century or even earlier. People from ethnic minorities will have made a considerable impact on local history in some communities in terms of changes in shops or places of worship and other areas. Many of the fine houses and gardens built during the eighteenth century and the development of some towns were financed from the proceeds of the slave trade but this is often ignored or possibly even airbrushed by conventional local historians. The truth is out there and we can assist in the development of a holistic approach to local history.

Libraries also have an important role in bridging the digital divide through providing Internet access and other computer facilities. The internet provider John Carr described librarians as the "Heroes of the Internet Age" at a workshop at Unions 21. Although currently the book still has a major role and its demise is not imminent this may not always be the case. Will it still be so in the next

century? The Internet will however have an increasing role in the educational process.

Libraries will have to decide their priorities. If it is decided that their role is largely to provide recreational reading and become an appendage of the Richard and Judy book club competing with booksellers such as Waterstones they will attempt to compete for a largely middle class readership. This will help neither libraries nor the book trade and take us down the route to charging and tendering or even abolition, as they would be providing the kind of service that Colonel Sibthorpe thought libraries were providing. If it is decided that libraries have a predominantly educational role and they have a different function from bookshops both libraries and bookshops will benefit and can complement one another by different roles. Unlike a bookshop, a library can have the role of being the collective memory of a community, which is essential in supporting any open lifelong learning. We have a choice.

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Special Issue on Lifelong Learners

Developing a NEETs Based Library Service

John Pateman

In 2003 I wrote a book for NIACE in their Guidelines to Learning series called Developing a Needs Based Library Service. This is a library service which has the strategies, structures, systems and culture which enable it to identify, prioritise and meet community needs.

Today I want to talk about developing a NEETs based library service. This is a library service which can identify, prioritise and meet the needs of young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training. From now on I will refer to these as NEETs.

My contention is that you have to develop a Needs Based Library Service if you are going to be able to meet the needs of NEETs. I am going to describe the building blocks for a Needs Based Library Service and relate this to NEETs.

But a Needs Based Library Service is able to identify, prioritise and meet the needs of any community, not just NEETs – it also works for refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers, Travellers and all the other so called 'hard to reach' or 'unreachable' groups (and these are not useful labels).

The four building blocks for a Needs Based Library Service are strategies, structures, systems and culture. I will outline how we developed these in Lincolnshire and I will give a NEET case study to show how we put these ideas into action.

Strategies

Whatever the subject matter, if you do not have a strategy for it in local government these days, then you might as well go home. We are required to produce a strategy for every issue and that is not a bad discipline because a strategy requires you to think about and write down what you want to achieve,

how you are going to achieve it, and how you will know when you have achieved it.

Strategy development should be an inclusive process and this is an effective way to engage stakeholders in what you are trying to achieve. In Lincolnshire our strategy for libraries was derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy produced by the Lincolnshire Assembly (our Local Strategic Partnership) and the County Council's corporate objectives – Lifestyle, Excellence, Access, Diversity and Security (the acronym for which is LEADS).

Our challenge was to convert these lofty aspirations and ambitions into meaningful words and activities. We did this by engaging with stakeholders including staff, service users and non users (which included NEETs). A series of focus groups (some exclusively for young people) created a strategy for the library service which was based on three key objectives – Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration. So NEETs were involved in the first stage of deciding the future direction and priorities of the library service.

We then formed strategy development groups made up of a cross section of stakeholders (including NEETs) to discuss and determine what these objectives mean for local communities in terms of service delivery. These strategy development groups were self determining and selected their own leaders and ways of working, free of management control. Their task was to develop strategies which would enable public libraries in Lincolnshire to promote social inclusion, develop lifelong learning and regenerate local communities. And NEETs were asked to relate these strategic priorities to their own needs.

These strategies were then aligned by senior management (which was our added value) to ensure that they were consistent and coherent across the Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration agendas. These strategies were then passed through the County Council's decision making processes to ensure corporate and political buy in and commitment. This is vital because once a strategy has been approved it can be used to determine priorities and resource allocation. NEETs were involved in every stage of the strategy development process.

Staff Structure

NEETs were also involved in developing the second building block of a Needs Based Library Service – structures. Once you have developed a new strategy, you then need to review your structures – staffing structure and service structure – to check whether these structures are able to deliver the new strategy. In most cases the existing structures are no longer fit for purpose and have to be changed to align them with the new strategy. The staffing and service structures must enable the library service to deliver Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration outcomes and meet the needs of NEETs and other communities.

In Lincolnshire this has led to the development of integrated staffing and service structures which combine the previously stand alone staffing and service structures of public libraries, museums (heritage) and adult learning. We have used the strategic objectives of Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration to bring these services together and break down professional silos and barriers.

Through engagement with stakeholders (including staff and NEETs) job titles, job descriptions, person specifications and competencies were reviewed and changed to align them with the new strategic direction. A good example is my own job title - from being Head of Libraries I became Head of Libraries, Learning and Inclusion, which encompasses two of our strategic objectives (Learning and Inclusion). My fellow Head of Service leads on Heritage, Regeneration and Improvement, which covers the third strategic theme (Regeneration).

All managers and staff went through a similar process of job redesign and we now have a management and staffing structure which has Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration running through it like the writing in a stick of seaside rock. Services to target groups (including NEETs) are reflected in every member of staff's job description so that no one can say that meeting the needs of NEETs, for example, is 'not my job'.

As well as this generic approach to meeting needs, there is also a focus on target groups through the Access and Engagement Teams. For example, the Access Team act like detached youth workers and engage with NEETs where they hang out. Bus stops are a good place to meet people in Lincolnshire because buses can be few and far between which creates the opportunity for some meaningful engagement!

After the Access Team has made initial contact with NEETs, the Engagement Team then works with them to identify activities which can engage them in library services. This often takes the form of a mini needs analysis so that the needs of NEET young people can be related to what libraries have to offer. These engagement activities are initially held in non library settings (such as youth clubs and village halls) but, over time, these activities are relocated into libraries. At this point, after NEET young people have crossed the threshold of the library, the responsibility for meeting their needs is passed over to front line staff – Cultural Services Assistants – who work with NEET young people to ensure that they get the full benefits of using the library service.

Service Structure

The service structure also needs to be aligned with the new strategy – this means looking at where libraries are located and seeking opportunities for co-location and partnership working to increase access to library services. In Lincolnshire our mantra is that the stand alone library is dead and we are only interested in development opportunities for our libraries which involve partnership working.

One way of achieving this is for partners to move into the library and share space, services, staff and resources. For example, Crowland library is run in partnership with Crowland Cares, a community group; and Mablethorpe, Horncastle and Coningsby libraries are operated in partnership with District Council Community Access Points.

Another form of partnership working involves library services being relocated into partner venues. For example, Belton Lane library is in a Children's Centre and Branston library forms part of an extended school. The library service engages with NEETs in partnership with the Youth Service at Scotter Library

(where we share staff and premises) and at the Earlsfield Youth Centre (where we provide ICT training).

I would like to introduce our case study at this point because we engaged NEETs in the development of a new library at Boutham in the suburbs of Lincoln. The community profile for Boutham library indicated that young people made up a significant proportion of the catchment population of 8,000 people. This figure was projected to increase and the community profile also indicated that of the 14 Super Output Areas that exist within the catchment, 4 are ranked amongst the top 30% most deprived areas in England, with one amongst the top 10%. Also within the catchment area there is a Surestart Centre, a number of schools, a youth centre and an adult education centre. We worked in partnership with all of these agencies, and with the local Tenants and Residents Association, to develop the new library.

The engagement of NEETs in the development of Boutham library was managed as part of our involvement in the national QLP-Y (Quality Leaders Program – Youth) program. The aim of this program is to develop library services and library staff by meeting the needs of local communities. This program is managed by London Metropolitan University and includes a range of local authorities including Portsmouth and the London Borough of Barnet. Lincolnshire was the only county council to take part in the program. I have bought along copies of QLP News and an article on the QLP-Y approach to staff development, if you want to find out more about QLP-Y.

In Lincolnshire we selected two members of staff to take part in the QLP-Y program – one from the library service and one from the youth service. From the library service we chose a manager who had experience of working with excluded young people, including the Secure Unit for Young Offenders at Sleaford. From the youth service we chose the manager of the Entry to Employment program. E2E consists of individually designed learning packages which respond flexibly to meet learner's needs and offer a range of provision including : basic skills; key skills; NVQ Level 1 or Level 2 units; vocational knowledge and skills; career awareness and management skills; employability skills including problem solving, effective thinking and team working; and work placements and tasters.

By engaging with NEETs in the development of Boutham library the objectives of the QLP-Y project were to: encourage NEET young people to use the library service; encourage NEET young people to enter the E2E program. The initial meeting with Boutham's NEETs took place in the local youth club and, with the young people's consent, this meeting was recorded on DVD as evidence of our engagement with the local community. The DVD makes for lively viewing as our Quality Leaders explain what the project is about and get ideas from the young people about developing Boutham library.

The NEETs suggested that the second planning meeting should take place in the existing Boutham library – a building which most of them admitted to never having visited before. It was useful to explore why they had not used the library and this helped to identify any potential barriers which might prevent young people from using the new library. The design of the existing library was one of the main barriers – it was old, ugly and off putting to young people. It looked very much like a municipal building and was often mistaken for public toilets.

Inside it was dark, dinghy and musty with an assorted collection of old furniture and fittings. It was not untypical of many public libraries across the UK, which have suffered from lack of investment over a long period of time.

Working with library staff, planners and architects the NEETs were given some real power and control over the planning and design of the new library. They had to be mindful of capital and revenue funding limits and so their 'planning for real' made them aware of the difficult choices which have to be made within finite resources. We were very impressed with the maturity which they brought to this task. The stereotypical view of young people is that they are all selfish, anti social hoodies who are only interested in themselves and do not care about the wider community. Our work with NEETs at Boultham library completely shattered these myths. Yes, they did want good quality services which met their specific needs, but they were also mindful of the needs of the whole community. As one young man put it 'I want this library to be good for me and my friends, but I also want it to be good for my granddad and my little sister as well.' And so these NEETs took an inclusive approach to developing their local library, and made compromises on what was spent on their own services to ensure that the needs of others were met. This was wholly consistent with our strategic objective to promote social inclusion.

The new library was designed by NEETs to remove all of the barriers which were inherent in the old library. The new library is bright, attractive, colourful, open plan and uncluttered with plenty of natural light. The shelving is modern and mobile with face on display space, and the furniture includes low level coffee table book display spaces. The audio visual area is high tech with facilities for people to listen to recordings before they borrow them. There is also an ICT learning suite, a community meeting room, public toilets and drinks / snacks machine. None of these features are ground breaking and can be found in many new libraries across the UK, but the driving force for these changes at Boultham was NEET young people.

The NEETs were also very keen that the library became a centre for all kinds of informal and formal learning, and they designed in a large number of People's Network terminals plus the ICT learning suite. The People's Network terminals enable informal learning and they are sited in a way which allows groups of users to gather around a single terminal, which is how NEET young people said that they preferred to engage with technology. They like to be able to interact with each other and the computer screen, which was not possible under the old 'one user to each pc' configuration. People's Network users were encouraged to focus only on their own terminal and any movement of chairs was frowned upon. This has led to some redesign of all our libraries and associated staff training.

The ICT suite provides a more formal learning environment and we work with a range of learning providers – commissioned via our Adult Learning Service – to run short courses at Boultham library. Some of these are programmed but many are on a drop in basis. NEETs have taken part in these courses which are designed to move them on to higher levels of learning. By designing formal and informal learning activities into Boultham library NEETs have helped us to meet our strategic objective of providing lifelong learning opportunities. Some of these NEETs have joined the Entry to Employment program and so libraries have helped to facilitate access to all three strands of the NEET agenda – Employment, Education and Training.

The use of Boultham library has increased as a result of the improvements suggested by NEETs. The community meeting space is used by a wide range of local groups. The new library has given Boultham a boost and hope for the future. The library will help to support people through the coming recession. Our engagement with NEET's has enabled libraries to deliver the strategic objective of community regeneration.

Systems

Moving onto the third building block of a Needs Based Library Service – Systems – these must also be consistent with the strategic objectives, staffing and service structures. Many of our traditional library systems create barriers to access and we need to remove these barriers if we are going to achieve our objectives of Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration. But first we have to identify these barriers and library staff are not in the best place to do this because they have worked with some of these systems for 150 years (the systems are that old, not the staff, but some staff seem to have been around that long!)

NEETs are in a good position to identify barriers and potential barriers to accessing library services and it is an instructive experience to walk around a library with young people and ask them to point out the barriers. We did this at Boultham and the NEETs were very challenging about our existing practices and asked 'Why do you do things like that?' and 'Why don't you do it like this instead? Or 'Why do you do it at all?' They were aware that we needed to have certain rules and processes in place but they were against fines, charges, borrowing limits, issue periods and counters. They saw these as being barriers to library access and as being exclusive rather than inclusive in their impact.

We are now using our strategic objectives of Learning, Regeneration and particularly Inclusion to persuade Members (who signed up to these objectives) that we need to change our systems to remove barriers to access. For example, each time we have reduced charges the use of our services has increased and it remains our aspiration and ambition to become the first public library service to abolish all fines and charges – watch this space.

Although we were not able to immediately meet all the needs of NEETs in terms of changes to our systems, we did manage to pull off some quick wins, and one of these has had a far reaching positive impact on the whole of the library service. The NEETs at Boultham identified the large bureaucratic library counter with staff behind it as a major barrier and suggested that we replace this with a smaller staff pod and a self issue terminal. We took them up on this suggestion and Boultham was the first library where we piloted RFID (self issue and stock control technology). This pilot was successful and Members have agreed to invest £1.5m in capital funding to roll out RFID across the library network. Other library services have gone down this route but the driving force for RFID in Lincolnshire was NEET young people.

Culture

The fourth and most important building block in developing a Needs Based Library Service is organisational culture – the way we do things around here. The biggest challenge of a Needs Based Library Service is to realign the organisational culture with the strategic objectives, staffing and service

structures and systems which deliver Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration. Changing the organisational culture is about changing attitudes and behaviours, hearts and minds. Engaging staff in the development of new strategies, structures and systems is the starting point for culture change. Involving staff in these processes in a meaningful way starts to shift attitudes and behaviour and helps them to own, control and understand the need for change. In Lincolnshire we have accelerated the culture change process via service planning, performance management, workforce development, positive action and partnership working. We have involved NEETs in staff recruitment and as volunteers to help change the culture.

Language is the basis of culture and if you can change the language then you can shift the culture. Library staff no longer talk in terms of adult lending, children's and reference services, but in terms of Inclusion, Learning and Regeneration services. Part of this culture change has been to actively involve local communities (including NEETs) in the planning, design, delivery and assessment of library services. So the NEETs at Boutham, as well as planning and designing the new library, have also been involved in the delivery and assessment of library services. Community engagement is a journey which should not end and we have worked with NEETs at every stage of that journey from planning and design through to delivery and assessment, which in turn informs the next stage of planning and design.

In conclusion, a Needs Based Library Service is one which can identify, prioritise and meet community needs, including those of NEETs. In order to achieve this you must develop strategies, structures, systems and a culture which enable you to identify, prioritise and meet community needs. A Needs Based Library Service can be summarised by using the words of a famous German philosopher who has come back into vogue during the current economic crisis, 'from each according to their ability (in terms of library services) and to each according to their needs (in terms of local communities).' If you adopt this approach to developing a Needs Based Library Service then you will enable your libraries to identify, prioritise and meet the needs of young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training.

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Special Issue on Lifelong Learners

Policing Library Users – Ethics and Practice

John Pateman

The last time that I presented a paper on this subject at a professional event I was told by one member of the audience that my presentation was too political. I was advised to keep my political views to myself and to focus on professional issues. Some members of our profession seem to think that library workers should be hermetically sealed off from the big political issues facing our country and the world. They argue that, in order to preserve our professional neutrality, we should not involve ourselves in external affairs such as the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the so called War on Terror is one huge external event which our profession cannot afford to ignore. There is plenty of evidence to show that the War on Terror abroad has also become a War on Civil Liberties at home. In our professional context this amounts to a war on freedom of information and expression. With language that George Orwell would approve of the government and security services tell us that, in order to protect our freedom and democracy, our civil liberties must be curtailed. The attendant hysteria whipped up by the popular media has created a climate of fear in which many citizens are prepared to give up their hard won historical freedoms. Nearly a quarter of the people surveyed for the 2008 British Social Attitudes study believe that torturing terror suspects is a 'price worth paying' to combat the threat of terrorism. And a staggering 50% find it acceptable to deny them a jury trial. 70% support compulsory identity cards for all adults, while an astonishing 80% say that they will accept phone tapping and the electronic tagging of terrorist subjects. 35% even support a ban on peaceful protests.

I have had two previous forays into this territory. *Hey Minister – Leave those books alone* (Update, March 2008) was a commentary on the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council draft guidance on controversial stock. *Libraries and Liberty* (Public Library Journal, Autumn 2008) considered the 'War on Terror'

and its effects on libraries and civil liberties. Copies of both articles are available for you to take away. I would now like to summarise the arguments which I present in these articles and bring them up to date.

The MLA guidance on 'extremist and inflammatory material' was commissioned by the government following the Prime Minister's national security statement to Parliament in November 2007. The first principle of the guidance was that 'Free expression and open libraries remain essential to British democracy.' But the guidance suggested that this principle is now qualified by the 2006 Terrorism Act which also qualifies the Public Libraries and Museums Act and a wide range of Equal Rights and Human Rights legislation.

The Terrorism Act, as interpreted by the draft MLA guidance, could have the disastrous effect of making library workers risk averse in their stock selection. Something similar happened when Clause 28 made it an offence to 'promote homosexuality.' As a result many library authorities refused to stock the Pink Paper or gay books and this practice remained in place long after Clause 28 was repealed.

Successful lobbying by the library community, led to amendments to the Terrorism Act, which acknowledged that the dissemination of terrorist literature had to be intentional for a conviction to be secured. Despite this amendment the Terrorism Act still contains significant maximum sanctions for a range of offences including: providing access to a terrorist publication (7 years in prison); encouragement to terrorism (7 years); and collecting or making a record of information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism (10 years). Even historical accounts such as *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by TE Lawrence and *Guerilla Warfare* by Che Guevara could be interpreted as glorifying terrorism if there is a possibility that a current reader would try and emulate the acts described.

The draft MLA guidance also suggested that Equalities legislation should be ignored: 'librarians and library authorities should not be unduly concerned with the provisions of race relations legislation, and focus on avoidance of commission of offences created by the Terrorism Act.' Similar guidance is given with regards to the Public Order Act, the Human Rights Act, and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act.

The professional response to this draft guidance was disappointing. Only 39 responses were received, including just 25 responses from local authorities. Most respondents welcomed the guidance, but there were some strongly expressed views that the guidance should not deliberately or inadvertently deter librarians and library authorities from selecting and holding material which people have a right to see and read. Concerns were also raised that the guidance could create a risk averse response and undermine what many respondents set out to be a core value of the British public library system – it is free, non judgemental and democratic. The biggest area of concern related to community cohesion - 43% of respondents did not think that the guidance would help to promote community cohesion through the provision of a balanced range of information, learning and cultural resources. Some respondents were concerned that the guidance could generate fear and apprehension and deter librarians from being proactive in promoting cohesion.

A revised version of the guidance has been produced which according to the MLA is 'quite different' to the initial draft. CILIP's Policy Forum has agreed unanimously to recommend endorsement of the new guidance in principle to CILIP Council. It is intended to take the final version of the guidance to the November meeting of the MLA Board with the endorsement of CILIP and the Society of Chief Librarians. Such an endorsement, in my view, would send the wrong signals to government and would indicate our compliance in their unwinnable War on Terror. I have had sight of the revised guidance and it is much improved, but I still strongly believe that our collective professional response should be that we do not need any additional guidance because we already have in place robust and tested stock management policies to deal with controversial, extremist or inflammatory materials. I will continue to argue that the very existence of such guidance, no matter how benign it is made, will have the effect of creating a fear factor among library workers which will tend to make them risk averse. I would now like to consider the wider effects of the War on Terror on libraries, library workers and library users.

The so called War on Terror has been brought back into focus by the current debate on 42 day detention. But the 'War on Terror' also poses a serious threat to libraries and the communities we serve. One threat is that government money is being diverted from UK public services, including libraries, to fund illegal occupations of sovereign nations. Another threat is that the fear and scaremongering engendered by the War on Terror is allowing the government to erode the civil liberties and democratic values which underpin our library services. The freedoms of information and expression have been reduced and undermined; censorship and surveillance are on the increase. The threat to our communities is that the 'War on Terror' is creating tensions and divisions. The Muslim community has been stereotyped and many young Muslims have become alienated and radicalised. Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers (all lumped together by the tabloid press) are viewed with suspicion and hostility. The BNP has never been so strong and the threats to diversity and community cohesion are clear.

The policing of library users, however, is not new. When the Poll Tax was introduced enabling legislation was passed which would facilitate the collection of personal data on Poll Tax defaulters. One specified source of information was public library membership records. When this became known to some local communities there was a sharp decline in the number of people joining public libraries because they were fearful of what their personal data would be used for. A similar threat is now posed by the Terrorism Act.

In June 2008 CILIP carried out a survey on police, surveillance and libraries. This was prompted by CILIP receiving a number of reports concerning increased police or other security agency activity with regard to libraries and their users. The survey was intended to collect evidence about this in order to establish how widespread it is and whether there are any issues causing concern to librarians with regard to professional ethics surrounding user privacy, censorship and freedom of access to information. The response to this survey was very disappointing: the survey was sent out to 640 libraries but only 55 responses were received.

However, 75% of responding libraries had been approached by the police or security agencies. Most respondents reported between one and three incidents since January 2006. The most common type of incident was criminal with 'other', terrorism and pornography each at around the same level. Five libraries said they had experienced 'fishing expeditions' by the police. One library was asked to supply details of what Muslim patrons were reading. Another turned down a request for websites visited by a library member. One library commented 'We had reports of Special Branch officers visiting our individual libraries to introduce themselves and to encourage staff to report any suspicious behaviour on the part of customers directly to them, particularly if it involved terrorism, political extremism and animal rights.' The survey also found that 38% of respondents do not have a formal policy for dealing with police requests.

I would treat the outcome of this survey with extreme caution because I think that it significantly underestimates the current situation for two reasons. Firstly, it only records surveillance activity which library staff know about. The request for library user information could be made at a higher corporate level which even the Chief Librarian may not be aware of. More sinister still, under the Terrorism Act, library user information can be retrieved by the security services by electronic means without the local authority knowing or being asked for permission. The second reason why the survey response rate was so low could be the fear factor which I mentioned earlier – library workers may be fearful of reporting police surveillance of their services because of the climate created by the Terrorism Act. In America library workers do not have any choice in the matter. Under Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act the FBI is permitted to access records, including library records, without a warrant. Moreover, the PATRIOT Act makes it illegal for librarians to refuse any police request to see what anyone is reading.

So what can we do about the threat to libraries posed by the War on Terror and the policing of library users? Library and information workers can oppose censorship and attacks on civil liberties by adopting the following measures: (1) Be aware of the anti terrorism legislation and its implications for freedom of information, expression and association. (2) Be aware of equality legislation such as the Race Relations Acts, Sex Equality Acts and Disability Discrimination Act. (3) Develop strategies and policies which incorporate the six strands of the Equality Standard for Local Government (IDeA, 2007) with regard to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age and faith. (4) Carry out Equality Impact Assessments (IDeA, 2008) on all existing policies and procedures, including stock selection and information policies. Make sure you have a policy in place for dealing with police requests for user information.

(5) Make your staff aware of these issues and carry out appropriate staff training and workforce development. (6) Brief your senior officers and Members on these issues and alert your Legal and Media Relations teams. (7) Engage with your local communities and raise awareness of the importance of public libraries and the access which they provide to unfettered information and democratic public space. (8) Work with national and local groups such as Liberty, trade unions and the media to campaign against censorship and attacks on civil liberties. We should speak out on these issues while we still have the right to do so.

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Special Issue on Lifelong Learners

***Information & Liberation: writings on the politics of
information & librarianship* by Shiraz Durrani. Library
Juice Press, 2008, ISBN 978-0-9802004-0-9**

John Pateman

This important collection spans nearly 30 years of professional achievement in Kenya and the UK. One of Durrani's mantras is that we should 'put ideas into action' and this book is a testament to the many original and radical ideas which Shiraz has shaped and put into practice. Nelson Mandela said that 'the struggle is my life' and a similar theme runs through this book, whether it is the fight against political corruption in Africa, or the need to combat exclusion and racism in UK libraries.

Shiraz was a member of the research team that produced the seminal report *Open to All? Public Libraries and Social Exclusion* which spawned two important legacy organisations: the Network managed by John Vincent and the Quality Leaders Programme led by Shiraz. This was a positive action project for Black Library Workers, and this was succeeded by a QLP (Youth) Project. Shiraz was active in the Diversity Council which later became the CILIP Diversity Group and he was a founder member of Progressive Librarianship in Africa and Information for Social Change.

The book is divided into five sections: *Society and Information* gives a 'South perspective' on library work; *The Battle Continues in a Colder Climate* documents Durrani's pioneering work in Hackney and Merton; *Taking a Stand* covers Durrani's challenging contributions to national debates and initiatives; *Book Reviews*; and *Organise Do not Agonise* sums up his approach to libraries and life:

'It is worth remembering that social revolutions start with small sparks. But these sparks do not come from the sky. They are created by the spread of alternative ideas, vision and experiences that can ignite the imagination of

people who move forward to force change in societies. A new world is possible, as the World Social Forum teaches us. Alternative ideas have the power to give birth to this new world. The Pan African Movement urges "organise, do not agonise". And relevant information can be the spark that leads to real liberation. Mau Mau activists in Kenya urged people to "never be silent". That, in the final analysis, is also the call of progressive librarians and information workers everywhere.'

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Special Issue on Lifelong Learners

Quality Leaders Project (Youth) Initiative

Jane Pitcher and Mary Eastwood-Krah

Introduction

In July 2008 the evaluators of the QLP-Y programme were commissioned to undertake a follow-up evaluation of the programme. The aims of this follow-up evaluation are to prepare an update evaluation report on outcome, progress and developments in QLP-Y since the main Evaluation Report (December 2007). Assess sustainability of staff development and service development activities based on evidence from QLs, Mentors, sponsors and young people. Evaluation activities commenced in August 2008 and will continue until October 2009. This is the interim report on the further stage of the evaluation.

Interim findings

All of the three remaining authorities have continued to deliver some activities beyond the formal end to the programme. In some cases, these were new initiatives and in others built upon previous work undertaken as part of the programme. While the two remaining staff managing the project centrally have returned to their normal university duties, they continue to offer support to the QLs in the three authorities and have encouraged the QLs to contribute to articles and other initiatives. An additional element of provision was the delivery by staff at London Metropolitan University of a module "Innovation and Development in Information Services". All participants agreed the module had been a good opportunity to meet people from other authorities and to have the time to reflect and engage in discussion.

One of the continuing challenges within the library setting is restructuring, which has impacted on all the participating authorities. There are concerns that some restructuring will impact on the work that has been built up under QLP-Y, particularly where it is not clear what place activities for teenage young people will have in future. Local authority bureaucracy continues to present a challenge for project implementation, particularly in relation to IT-based activities.

A further challenge is that in some cases young people move on and consistency can be lost. In some cases young people had dropped out. This was also a learning process for young people taking responsibility for organising activities. Nonetheless, all the projects felt that they had managed to contact and engage hard-to-reach young people.

One of the main impacts on young people as a result of their participation in QLP-Y was to show them that libraries could be fun places that had relevance for them and that they could be made to feel welcome. QLP-Y activities had also increased young people's trust in libraries. QLs were in agreement that the activities had helped to build the confidence of many participants, through developing new skills that will help them in the future, including social, leadership and IT skills. By taking ownership of specific projects and having to deal with some of the challenges involved through different local authority rules, participants had also developed administrative and negotiation skills. Feedback from young people who had attended activities was overwhelmingly positive. It was clear they had developed skills, such as graphics, editing and writing; and also the confidence to deal with adults in 'official' positions.

The QLP-Y project has also had some impact on the skills of QLs, such as strategic and leadership skills, and developing a variety of youth working skills. The individual development of QLs through taking on additional responsibilities and developing new working styles was also an important benefit of QLP-Y. The programme had helped change attitudes towards young people more widely within the participating libraries and enabled QLs to identify gaps in service, which have started to be addressed, although it was recognised that there is more to be done in this respect.

While the impact of the QLP-Y project on the wider organisation has been relatively limited, there is evidence of the ways in which QLP-Y has influenced services to young people within the participating libraries. In one authority the courses developed through QLP-Y have become part of ongoing activities for young people. In another, a youth board has been created through QLP-Y and this is continuing beyond the funding. There is also a commitment to creating a teenage zone in each library. In a third authority, a group of young people involved in developing a 'mangazine' has an allocated space they can use to meet on an ongoing basis.

The lack of funding beyond QLP-Y means that relatively few activities have been planned for the future specifically for young people who have been non-users of libraries. Without dedicated funding for these it may be difficult to secure the commitment of partner organisations. There was general agreement amongst QLs that, although QLP-Y had helped to focus attention on the issue of services to young people, more needed to be done to address their needs in future.

Overall, the benefits of QLP-Y were that it helped to emphasise an area of need and bring into libraries young people who were not traditional users; young people were involved in planning and delivering activities; and the QLs themselves had experienced personal development and a broadening of their interests and expertise. Contributing factors were that the QLP-Y project was tailored towards the needs of young people in each authority and the project also developed in the context of what was seen to be feasible for the QLs and

each authority to fit in to its organisational structures. All of the libraries worked in partnership with other departments, although the benefits of this partnership were seen more in some projects than in others.

There is a clear indication from the previous evaluation and current work that many activities are innovative, although the QLs have come across challenges to implementing these, particularly because of internal bureaucracy and a lack of IT support and systems. There remains a reluctance to hand over power to young people. More extensive, longer-term change is needed in libraries and the impetus for this may come from external initiatives independent of QLP-Y, although this project has contributed to some culture change and has helped to influence the views of staff beyond those directly involved in QLP-Y. Although responsibility for working with young people should be shared amongst staff, the reality is that some of the impetus came from the QLs within the framework of a semi-formal project, as discussed earlier. There is thus the danger, once the QLs return to their former or new library roles, that they will no longer have the time and flexibility to maintain ongoing projects set up under QLP-Y.

The full report is available at the QLP website: <http://www.seapn.org.uk/qlp/>.